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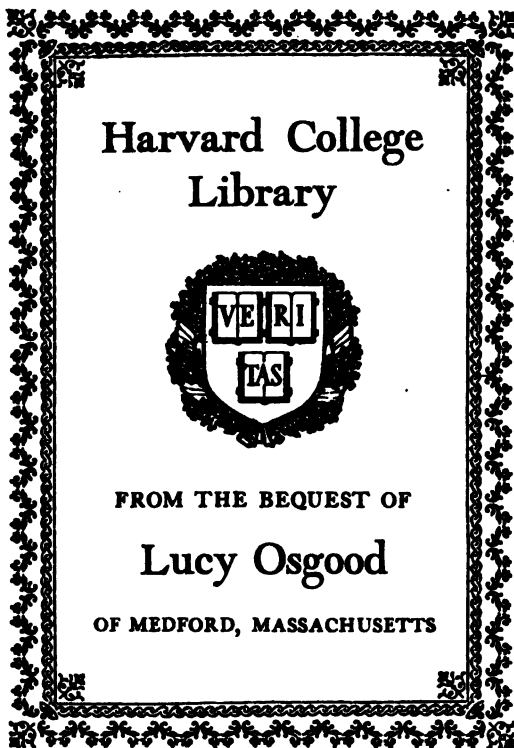
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# HISTORICAL RESEARCH

## AN OUTLINE OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

BY

JOHN MARTIN VINCENT

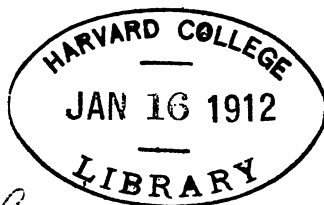
PROFESSOR OF EUROPEAN HISTORY IN THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY



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## PREFACE

As indicated by the title, this book is offered as an outline, rather than as an encyclopedic treatment of historical investigation, and the possible reader more constantly in mind has been the advanced student who is about to enter the field of research, either as a profession or as a serious avocation. Experience has shown that both time and facility are gained by a rapid review at the outset of the principles and scope of the science; for, although historical research is only the application of logic and common sense to the past affairs of mankind, the numerous varieties of material and their respective values are not always at first obvious. It is on this account that certain of the auxiliary sciences are introduced, not with a view of providing complete information, but in order to exhibit the foundations upon which the genuine sources must rest, and with the hope that the reader will be stimulated to further inquiry.

The obligations of the author to previous writers on this subject are evident on every page, and from many friends who are not quoted I have received valuable suggestions. To certain of my colleagues I am particularly indebted. Professors James W. Bright, Harry L. Wilson, and Edward F. Buchner, and Dr. R. V. D. Magoffin have read the matter in

whole or in part and have given me faithful admonition. Mr. Lynn R. Méekins, editor of the *Baltimore Star*, gave me the benefit both of his literary taste and his professional knowledge, and Miss Mabel M. Reese, assistant in the university library, rendered indispensable aid in the reading of proof.

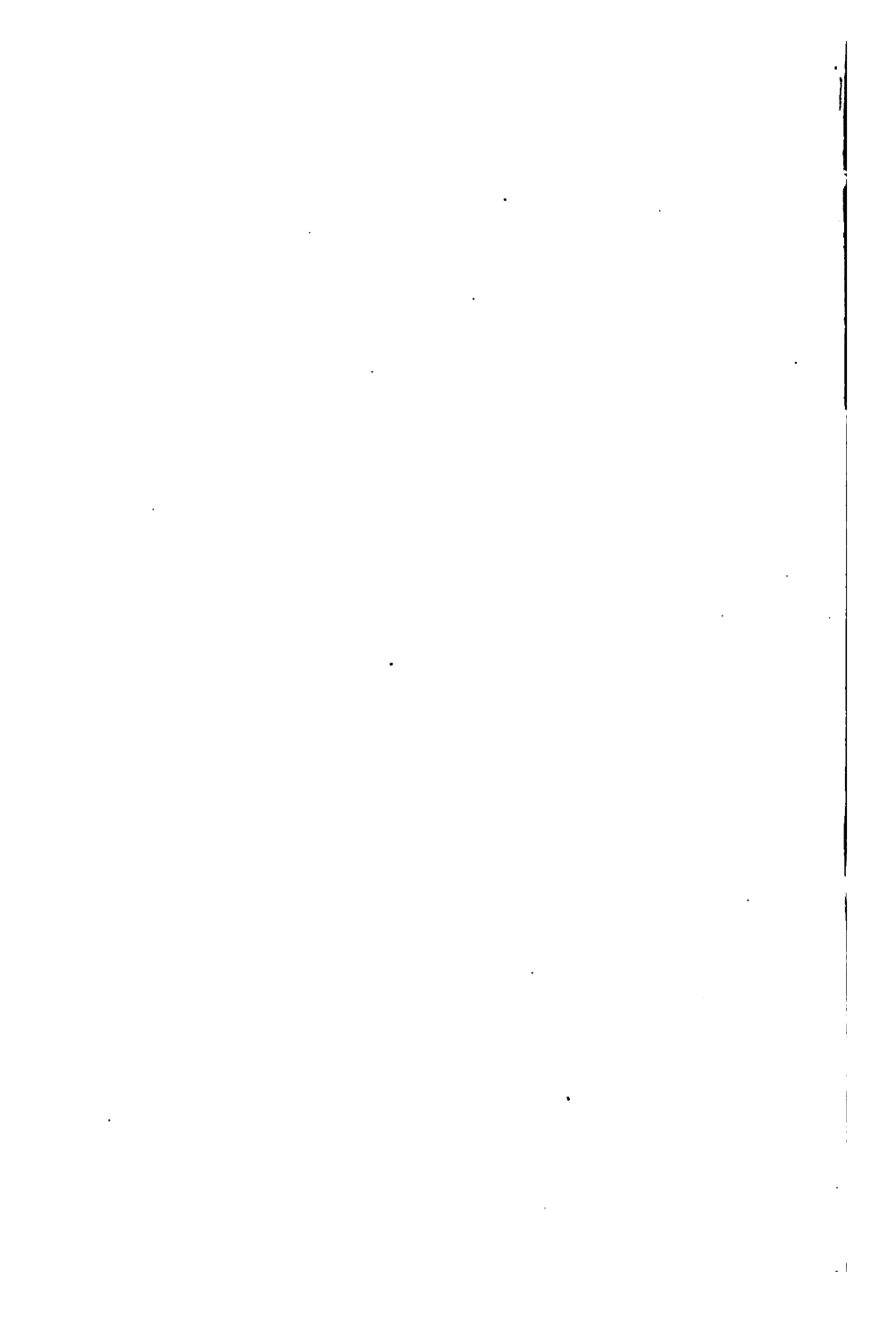
Without laying upon his friends the deficiencies of the book, the author entertains the hope that it will assist in some measure the extension of historical research.

JOHN MARTIN VINCENT.

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY,  
*June, 1911.*

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# HISTORICAL RESEARCH

## CHAPTER I

### THE DEFINITION OF HISTORY

WHEN the history of the past began to be told among primitive people it is evident that no questions were asked about the theories upon which it was based, nor concerning the motives which actuated the narrator. It was sufficient to know that stories of the forefathers were about to be related, and antiquity lent its ears to every minstrel in turn. The curiosity of man about his predecessors doubtless started in his craving for entertainment, and the beginnings of history may be seen today in the Bedouin story-teller surrounded by his tribesmen, breathlessly intent.

The contrast between this primitive history and the modern works of erudition is so vast that one is led at once to inquire how came the world to hold its present conceptions. As the long line of historians is examined it becomes clear that history, even from the time it was first seriously written down, has passed through a variety of forms, and that the definition itself has had a history of its own. The etymology of the word is interesting, but gives no

Primitive  
History.

authority for the modern contents of the term. History is derived from *ιστορία*, which means primarily a learning, or knowing by inquiry, but every age has declared for itself to what that inquiry shall be directed and what subjects are worth knowing as history. Usage has remained steadfast only in this, that in some way or another history has been the story of mankind.

Herodotus.

The first known example of extended historical composition is the work of Herodotus. He was no longer in the earliest infancy of history, for he states at the opening of the first book that he wishes not only to relate the glorious actions of the forefathers, but to give reasons for them as well.

κ "This is a publication of the researches of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, in order that the actions of men may not be effaced by time, nor the great and wondrous deeds displayed both by Greeks and barbarians deprived of renown; and among the rest, what were their grounds of strife."

Like others of the ancients, Herodotus combined geographical description with his accounts of states, and with many side issues and anecdotes he put together one of the most interesting as well as one of the most valuable of books. He was a capital story-teller, but in places was weak in the critical examination of his materials. He was not altogether credulous about the information which fell in his way, but with charming naïveté provided a line of retreat for himself and his readers.

"For myself, my duty is to report all that is said, but I am not obliged to believe it all alike—a remark



which may be understood to apply to my whole history.”<sup>1</sup>

Thucydides, on the other hand, presented the first great example of careful sifting of evidence and with a plan which is purposely confined to the political and military history of the Peloponnesian war. He took part in person during a portion of the war and afterward visited the principal scenes of conflict, but, more than this, he sought carefully for information from important personages.

“In the history of the war, I have followed neither the first report nor my own opinion, but rather I have given those writings which I have either seen myself or have learned of others with the greatest diligence. To find the truth caused me much trouble, for the witnesses of the various events were not agreed in their accounts, but both sides were affected by partisanship and failure of memory.”<sup>2</sup>

In explaining the current of events Thucydides from time to time summarizes the earlier history of the states participating in this conflict and in so doing displays much acumen in distinguishing between the mythical and historical accounts of their origin. He is not always successful in his aim, but he is distinctly a truth-seeker. He attempts to be also a teacher and assumes to tell both “what has happened and will hereafter happen again according to human nature.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, Book VII, Ch. 152.

<sup>2</sup> Thucyd., I, 22.

<sup>3</sup> Thucyd., I, 22.

Thus in the fifth century before Christ there was set before the world a high example of research and presentation, and with it a theory of the object and content of history. Ever since that time men have been trying to improve this definition, yet they have agreed in one thing: the historian must seek the truth. Controversy over the definition has concerned the kinds of facts wanted, and as to whether the historian should at the same time be a prophet and a moral teacher.

**Military History.**

During a very long period the works which could be dignified with the name of histories concerned themselves chiefly with statecraft, wars, battles, or diplomacy. These were the conspicuous features in a nation's life and were regarded as the only essentials both by the writers and by the public. There were natural reasons for this conception of history. In the term "government" are included a great number of important activities of man. In one form or another, government is continuous and provides a groundplan upon which to show the evolution of a people. At critical junctures the fate of nations has hung upon battles. During certain periods also monarchies have been so absolute that the welfare of the people depended on the personal wishes or even whims of kings, consequently dynastic history and even court intrigues were decidedly contributory to national history in its larger aspects.

**Modern Social History.**

It is a discovery of modern times that there is more in the life and development of a nation than these externals. In the first place modern nations have become more democratic. The people share

in that government which was once more exclusively in the hands of rulers, and it is now natural to inquire into the condition of the peoples of past ages and to trace their development to present times. Moreover, it has gradually dawned upon the world that the economic condition of a nation has a great part in its politics, whatever its form of government may be. Social, intellectual, and moral conditions have to be taken into consideration even in the history of politics, and much more so if a complete picture of a nation's development is to be given.

Consequently, the scope of historical research is much wider and the kinds of facts wanted are more numerous than were required even in the century before this. To cite English examples, Gibbon wrote his chapters on the social conditions of the early middle ages apart from the narrative. Sharon Turner at the beginning of the nineteenth century, after giving the early political history of the Anglo-Saxons, describes their government and customs, but without showing the intimate connection of many of them with the development of law and government. Macaulay, though not the first to complain, revolted from the exclusively political and dynastic history. He believed these to be essential parts of history, but that we should view also the nation. The ideal historian, he said, "considers no anecdote, no peculiarity of manner, no familiar saying, as too insignificant for his notice, which is not too insignificant to illustrate the operation of laws, of religion and of education, and to mark the progress of the human mind."

J. R. Green. Macaulay used his social facts too much as external literary ornament, but his doctrine led in the modern direction, the best popular exponent of which in English history was John Richard Green. In the preface to his *Short History of the English People*, Mr. Green said:

- x "At the risk of sacrificing much that was interesting and attractive in itself and which the constant usage of our historians has made familiar to English readers, I have preferred to pass lightly and briefly over the details of foreign wars and diplomacies, the personal adventures of kings and nobles, the pomp of courts, or the intrigues of favorites, and to dwell at length on the incidents of that constitutional, intellectual, and social advance in which we read the history of the nation itself. It is with this purpose that I have devoted more space to Chaucer than to Cressy, to Caxton than to the petty strife of Yorkish and Lancastrian, to the Poor Law of Elizabeth than to her victory at Cadiz, to the Methodist revival than to the escape of the Young Pretender."

The works of these popular writers were the surface indications of the changes which had taken place in their day. Mr. Green's most scientific researches are found in his books on the Anglo-Saxon period, the Conquest of England and the Making of England, yet his history is an example of the tendency now everywhere evident. The life of the nation in all important directions must be displayed, and consequently the content of the word history obtains a new and extended meaning.

As already intimated, there has been no agreement

in the wording of a definition. Mr. Freeman said,<sup>1</sup> Freeman:  
 "History is the science of man in his political character," and his motto declared that "History is past politics and politics present history," but Mr. Freeman includes in the word politics many more social phenomena than is customary in everyday usage. On the other hand, writers upon sociological inquiry insist that political history has no value, but that social phenomena alone are of permanent interest. The doings of the average or typical man are wanted, for the activities of individuals are mostly the accidentals of society.

An analysis of these controversies will show that they are derived from difference of view as to the object of writing history. As we have noted before, the primitive object was to entertain. From Thucydides onward there have been historians whose avowed aim has been to instruct and to guide the conduct of political life. Dionysius, following Thucydides, was of opinion that history is philosophy teaching by examples.<sup>2</sup> Machiavelli said: "The wise men say with reason that to foresee the future it is necessary to consult the past, because the events of this world have in all times well defined relations with those of times which have preceded. Produced by men who are and always have been animated by the same passions they ought necessarily to have the same results." In our day Herbert Spencer complained that histories were ordinarily so full of biographies and accidental matter that they gave no

×

Political His-  
torians.

×

<sup>1</sup> *Methods of Historical Study*, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> *Ars Rhet.*, XI, 2. (Authorship in doubt.)

help in deciding on his conduct as a citizen. Professor Seeley, himself a historian, expressed the same opinion in a modified way when he said that "history while it should be scientific in its method should pursue a practical object. That is, it should not only gratify the reader's curiosity about the past, but modify his views of the present and his forecast of the future."<sup>1</sup>

**Moral History.**

Akin to this view of the historian's duty was the demand that history should point out the moral lessons of the past for the guidance of present or future generations. In all such cases the historian would be required to enter the domain of prophecy. In order to furnish such guidance the scholar would have to study the tendencies of the present, and follow the example of the weather bureau in forecasting probabilities. In the same class is the extreme school of sociological students who attempt to find the "laws of history." Following the method of natural science, they propose that the historian shall find out the circumstances under which the events of social and political existence occur. Modern statistics show that a certain number of births, a certain number of business failures, and numerous other events of this character occur during a stated period, therefore it is but a step further to find out the necessary social conditions which always precede an agrarian revolt, a religious revival, or a period of excellence in art.

**Sociological History.**

Historians are greatly indebted to the advocates of these views for suggestions of new causes in history

<sup>1</sup> J. R. Seeley, *Expansion of England*. Introduction.

and new fields of research. Discussion of the subject will find place in a later chapter, but we may pause long enough to point out that the materials for such inquiry are insufficient to establish law in the sense of inevitable recurrence. Statistics and observations of this character were not made in earlier ages, and to establish a law it must be first clearly shown that the conditions in all cases are identical. Thomas Buckle's brilliant effort to write the history of civilization in England was based upon the theory that man was entirely the creature of his environment, mechanically regulated according to the laws of physiology and physical geography. Even if we assume as proved the difficult proposition that the will of man is a negligible quantity in history, the data upon which we might base laws of recurrence of events or social phenomena are insufficient to be exact. In fact, we must include the influence of individuals and the moral nature of peoples in any estimate of history. Man is guided by social experience only in a large and general way, for identical conditions never recur, and prophecy can form no part of the duty of the historian.

Buckle's  
Theory.

Moral lessons may be drawn from the events of history, or from the biographies of distinguished personages, but it does not necessarily follow that these are to be included in the historical narrative. Histories have also been written for the purpose of showing the designs of God in the experiences and destinies of nations, but one need not be an atheist, nor deny an overruling Providence, if he takes a more modest attitude and does not assume to know

Providential  
History.

x exactly the infinite designs of the Creator, or profess to be able to point out the special applications of His wisdom. In all cases where teaching a lesson is the avowed object, whether it be political, moral, or theological, there is danger that the facts in greater or less degree will be unconsciously warped to suit the theme. Comment upon history is not history. The world needs first the truth about the past. The experience of scholars agrees with the dictum of Lord Bacon when he said, "It is the true office of history to represent the events themselves together with the counsels, and to leave the observations and conclusions thereupon to the liberty and faculty of every man's judgment."<sup>1</sup>

Development  
the Keynote.

We have noted that the scope of history has broadened by taking more and more factors into account. Wars and statecraft are now regarded as a less important part of national life. This has come about not merely through curiosity to find out how people lived in time past, but in the search after the explanation of national development. We find differences in the wording of definitions of history because men attempt to compress into a sentence a philosophy of civilization, but in all definitions there is one invariable idea, that of evolution. The thread upon which the story of any nation hangs is development from the past into the present. The object of historical science is to find out how these things came to be. This is classified as genetic history. What was the genesis and growth of the life and institutions of the nation

<sup>1</sup> Bacon's Advancement of Learning, II, 136.



under consideration, or what was its development during a given period, is the question to be answered. The object of research is to understand, "forschend zu verstehen."<sup>1</sup>

At first sight this seems to be an obvious statement which might be assumed as understood, but this principle of development has not always been acted upon. In the light of it we may discover the nature of the research and the kinds of materials to be employed. Everything that contributes to the growth of a people must be considered. Whatever is not intimately connected with that development is outside the scope of historical inquiry, showing here a guiding principle in the elimination of the unimportant matter which every investigator meets, and with which the pages of history are often encumbered.

There is a practical reason, therefore, for the beginner to think carefully over his definition of history; not only in order to show its value as a study and the various uses to which it may be applied, but in order to direct the course of research. Frequently, close application to a special subject makes it appear to be extremely important, or facts very interesting in themselves are discovered and the student is inclined to include them all in his narrative. The choice of a theme of inquiry and the amount of attention which it deserves should be determined by the relation of the subject to the larger development of the nation or of society. However small the topic, the treatment should have in view its contribution

Importance of  
Definition.

<sup>1</sup> Droysen, *Grundriss der Historik*. § 8.

to the larger history of which it is a part. Formulas and definitions of history will be useful in so far as they keep the student steadfast to this point of view. Ranke's definition of universal history contains the elements which can be applied to any portion:

“Universal History (Weltgeschichte) embraces the events of all nations, and times in their connection in so far as these affect each other, appear one after the other, and all together form a living totality

The foregoing pages have simply indicated in outline the tendencies which led to the modern conception of history, and in illustration well-known writers have been cited who both guided and reflected popular interest in the subject. If the history of modern scientific research were to be written another chapter would be necessary. The impulse came from Germany in the early part of the nineteenth century, and this tendency was emphasized by Leopold von Ranke and his disciples. German scholars have been ever since in the front ranks of science which is no longer bounded by geographical limits, while Austria and France have become great centres of research. Inspiring as it is, the story of this movement will not be related here, but the principles which were revived and established by these scholars will be made use of in this outline of method.

<sup>1</sup> Ranke, Vorrede zur Weltgeschichte, VI-VIII.

## CHAPTER II

### CLASSIFICATION OF HISTORICAL MATERIALS

THE person who approaches the history of a given country ordinarily finds that some one not very far back has already attempted the task, and it may be that a long line of historians have preceded the modern exponents of that people. Consequently, the investigator who feels impelled to inquire further is confronted with a double duty. He must take account of what has already been written by the more serious of his predecessors, and must explore the materials out of which the history has been constructed. His task is not concluded by an examination of the documents cited by his forerunners. More is required than mere proof that the quotations are correct. The whole mass of available material must be assembled and the narrative reconstructed by fresh interpretation. Therefore, in order to be sure that all kinds of evidence have been marshalled, and that the testimony has been weighed with due regard to its quality, it is important that the investigator have a well defined idea of the nature and extent of historical materials in general.

The materials for the study of the history of society fall into two general classes:

**Classes.**

First, those which man has consciously recorded for the purpose of transmitting information.

Second, relics of man's activity, whether written or otherwise, which have come down to us from a remote time past without the conscious intention of transmitting connected information.

There are certain other materials which may combine the qualities of both of these classes and which have been called "memorials." In some cases the difference between memorials and transmitted history is not at once apparent, but the distinction between conscious and unconscious evidence is fundamental, and that the degree of relationship must be established before the material can be used. The classification of sources, therefore, is an important part of historical research.

**Distinctions.**

Much of the matter, to be sure, easily falls into place. Memoirs, biographies, and annals obviously were intended to be transmitted to the future. The battle-axe, on the other hand, is an unconscious relic of the warfare of its day. A boundary stone is a mere indicator of lines for practical use, as a gravestone containing simply a name is no more than this, but when the tombstone contains an inscription the historical record begins. When the epitaph is extended into an account of the deeds and virtues of the deceased, the relic is transformed into a memorial. So when the boundary stone records in cuneiform characters the sale of a field at a time estimated at about B. C. 1400,<sup>1</sup> you have the relic of a business transaction, but one which may throw great

<sup>1</sup> British Museum, No. 90,833.

on the customs of the times or the relations of great persons of the period. A Babylonian brick is in itself an interesting object, for it illustrates the particulars of a certain ancient industry, but when a fragment contains the name of Urengur, king of Ur, about B. C. 2300, the interest intensifies; and when another specimen records not only the name of this king, but also an account of the building of a temple to the goddess Ninâ in the city of Erech, the brick has risen to the rank of an historical document.<sup>1</sup> Assur-nasir-pal, king of Assyria, B. C. 885, sheathed his palace with marble sculptured in relief, and upon this he engraved long accounts of his greatness and his conquests with the evident intention of leaving the record to posterity. Not only these architectural memorials and ornaments, but also multitudes of clay tablets containing the history of his predecessors were collected and written at the command of this king. Many of the sculptures and thousands of the tablets have been recovered and now adorn the British Museum, so that the intentions of the royal patron of letters have been carried out in an unexpected manner.

In whatever form prepared, whether it be in Intention.  
stone, clay, papyrus, or paper, the intention of the producer toward the future is the factor which determines the general classification. As we proceed we shall find that this holds a very important relation to the criticism of the source. The question whether an object is simply a relic of the period or contains consciously transmitted information is fundamental.

<sup>1</sup> British Museum, Nos. 90,296, and 90,015.

A law is properly classified as a relic of the period in which it was enacted, and is evidence of the legal and moral perceptions of that people, but if one examine a statute of the Tudor period, for example, it will be found to contain at least two distinct parts. A preamble gives the reason for the enactment while the sections establish the law and the penalties. The preamble is the explanation and justification intended for the public, present and future, and must be judged upon its own merits and intentions.<sup>1</sup>

#### Newspapers.

A newspaper is likewise a complex document in which materials of various classes are included. The news items are intended to be the current events of the day. The editorials refer partly to current events and partly to political or social conditions. The advertisements are evidences of business and social institutions intended for present information not future record. They are unclassified relics of the period. The newspaper as a whole may be regarded as a literary product of its time, and for historical purposes its contents must be analyzed, each part judged and made use of according to the class in which it belongs.<sup>2</sup>

#### Order of Importance.

If a chronological order were to be pursued from primitive times onward a classification of relics would begin with relics, for at first these are the evidences we have. Undoubtedly man has lived long before he began to write down his experiences, consequently we have the common

<sup>1</sup> See page 171.

<sup>2</sup> See page 215.

"prehistoric remains," but in the conduct of historical research the first instinct leads one to inquire if there be any record of the period. In fact, when the materials are appraised it becomes apparent that the relics alone are insufficient, and history would be impossible without conscious attempts to connect its parts. The order of procedure, therefore, is to find what has been written upon the period or topic and then determine what light can be drawn from the collateral material.

It is almost impossible to describe the various classes of documents and sources without entering upon criticism or interpretation of them; therefore, to avoid repetition the fuller consideration is deferred to later chapters.

It may, however, serve a useful purpose to present a brief tabular view of historical materials in such a way as to show the grand divisions. In the one which follows the consciously transmitted information appears first in its three forms as written, oral, and artistic. This is not the order of historic precedence, for if that were followed the remains of the human body would come first, for undoubtedly many a human creature passed from this earth before he was able to shape even an implement which would give token of his existence. Nor may one assume that the order of importance can be fully displayed in any table, for at a given point the conscious testimony may have the most value, and in another historical problem the relics may outweigh all other evidence. It is, nevertheless, a valuable preparatory exercise to formulate in the mind the general classi-

fications of material and to place under each division all possible examples.<sup>1</sup>

## HISTORICAL MATERIALS.

### I. CONSCIOUSLY TRANSMITTED INFORMATION.

#### *Written.*

Chronicles, annals, biographies, memoirs, diaries, genealogies, certain classes of inscriptions.

#### *Oral Tradition.*

Ballads, anecdotes, tales, saga.

#### *Artistic Productions.*

Historical paintings, portraits, scenic sculpture, coin types.

### II. RELICS, OR UNCONSCIOUS TESTIMONY.

Human remains, language, institutions, products of the hand, implements, fine products of the mind, business records, literature.

### III. INSCRIPTIONS, MONUMENTS, PUBLIC DOCUMENTS OF CERTAIN CLASSES.

All of these may have also qualities belonging to Class I or Class II.

<sup>1</sup> Compare the table in Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode*, 258. (Ed. 1908.)



### CHAPTER III

#### EXTERNAL CRITICISM

SINCE the object of history is to establish as nearly as possible the true development of society or of some selected part, it becomes necessary for the historian first to test the data furnished by his predecessors and to determine whether the fragments of information received are themselves true, or what measure of probability should be ascribed to them. These are the duties of historical criticism. Criticism, however, is not the chief end of historical research. The combination of results, the perception of the relations of events, and the final construction of these into narratives are the great objects of the study, yet these are of no value unless based on scientific criticism. Not until the isolated data have been proved and interpreted may the historian draw safe conclusions.

The processes of criticism fall naturally into two parts. The first important step is to determine whether the given source is at all admissible as evidence, or, in other words, whether the material is genuine or not. Conclusions are worthless and labor is wasted if the document is fraudulent or misjudged. It is necessary to know at the outset whether the chronicle, charter, or relic is in reality what it claims to be, or what it has been esteemed to be. It is

important to determine where and when it originated, who was its author, and where he derived his information. The rules of procedure by which these facts are determined in historical research constitute External Criticism. The propriety of this definition will be more fully observed when the various materials are criticized in detail. The process has to do with those data about a document or relic which relate to forms and appearance rather than to contents.

Internal Criticism.

The second part of the critical process weighs the relation of the testimony to the truth. One must decide whether the statements made are trustworthy and, if not absolutely certain, whether they are probable. The degree of probability or possibility must be determined, or, if necessary, the whole cast out as worthless. This is Internal Criticism, and is often called Higher Criticism, since it deals with more important matter than external form.<sup>1</sup> However, the external facts about a document are often obtained in part by a study of the contents. The date of a paper may be determined sometimes by what it says or by the way it is written, hence external criticism may employ any means at its command to establish the outside data of a source. The definition explains the kind of things to be proved, not the means used to prove them. Owing to their essential importance,

<sup>1</sup> The term Higher Criticism has in recent years received a popular meaning in connection with Bible study which obscures its real significance. In the minds of some, higher criticism means the rationalization of scripture and designates a class of doctrines at variance with orthodox views. This is an unfortunate use of the words, for they ought to be employed without theological significance.

the processes of external criticism demand attention first.

The labors of the historical student are greatly increased by the fact that materials are frequently placed before him about which there is doubt as to their genuineness. This is not necessarily due to gross forgery, but may come from the absence of proper information, the lack of name or date, or the presence of doubtful statements which throw suspicion on the whole. The investigator of mediæval history is particularly liable to meet questionable material in manuscript, and the student of antiquity is obliged to test carefully what are offered as inscriptions and relics. Modern history is not exempt, but since the invention of printing the forms of difficulty and the process of proof are somewhat different. The necessity for the test of genuineness, however, remains as before.

It is the further misfortune of the historian that **Error.** his material is subject not only to the variableness and idiosyncrasies of human nature in the first producer, but also to the errors and misconceptions of every writer who has intervened. A large part of his work consists in undoing what his predecessors have conceived. This labor is not due to the supposition that historical writers have had a great desire to give false information because in the course of time a great many mistakes have been made. All kinds of sources from relics to chronicles have been accepted for what they were not, and it has taken a long time to correct the mistakes.

Errors spring chiefly from two evils which beset

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all arts and sciences, ignorance and superficiality, and both of these lead to neglect of the rules of evidence. In a simple age where credulity is the rule we may not expect that the origin and character of documents will be carefully scrutinized. The same result occurs when a person who is inadequately prepared attempts to write the history of a period and accepts the materials he finds in the light of his imperfect knowledge. Lack of experience in the testing of documents and neglect of the laws of evidence, because the writer was not aware of the origin and nature of his materials, are fruitful sources of error. The more one knows about a subject the more will he appreciate the quality and significance of documents as they come into view. It is the experience of every investigator that he began to see things only after he had been some time at work.

The evils of haste and superficiality are likely not only to mar the literary style of the historian who succumbs to them, but their effects are to be found at a more fundamental point. A partial or slovenly examination of the materials will perpetuate the errors of the past and engender new misconceptions for the future. The day has gone by when haste will be accepted as an excuse for errors of fact or for mistakes due to inadequate use of available material. Yet all of these troubles must be anticipated and the work of predecessors carefully scanned.

Hypercriticism.

Occasionally errors are perpetuated through over-refinement of criticism. The ambition to find some-

thing new, or to maintain a reputation for keenness, has sometimes led to the rejection of genuine historical documents. This may not be a portentous evil, and probably is not so destructive as a captious skepticism which holds everything under suspicion. This may come from a pessimistic view of human nature, or from the prejudice of a preconceived theory which is easier to assert than to prove by careful inquiry. The personal equation has to be taken into account in critics as well as in chroniclers and historical actors.

Errors of statement and conception have also been handed down for which the older writers are not fairly responsible. New materials have been continually accumulating, the knowledge of archæology, of diplomatics, of languages, and of all other auxiliaries of history has been increasing from year to year. Previous judgments, therefore, must come up for review. Taken with the fact that each generation demands a wider view of history, the correction of the inevitable errors of the predecessors furnishes a necessary portion of the occupation of the historical student. At this point we are concerned only with errors about the document.

In general it may be said that it is not the object of external criticism to find out and catalogue all of the mistakes that have been made about a document, but, at the same time, it may be necessary to trace out a long series of misapprehensions in order to get back to the true origin. The source itself when pruned of its excrescences can then be estimated at its true value. It is not necessary to be awed or over-

Object of External Criticism.

whelmed by the prospects of errors to be met. There has been a great deal of fraud and a large amount of error encountered in the course of ages. Critics are wont to spend much time in discussing the variations and corruptions of texts while the sound material is left to take care of itself. Speaking of externals only, a vast body of undoubtedly genuine historical sources has been handed down to this generation. The value of the contents is the chief matter for discussion. The fact of transmission can be safely proved. Isaac Taylor, writing of ancient literature, and possibly to comfort any who might be alarmed about the Scriptures, said in regard to textual difficulties:

Textual Diffi-  
culties.

“The actual amount and the importance of these corruptions of the text of ancient authors is likely to be overrated by general readers. . . . By far the greater number of all ‘various readings’—perhaps nineteen out of twenty—are purely of a verbal kind, and they are such as can claim the attention of none but philologists and grammarians: a few may deserve the notice of every reader of ancient literature; and a few demand the consideration of the student of history. But, taken in the mass, the light in which they should be regarded is that of their furnishing a significant and conclusive proof of the care, fidelity, and exactness with which the business of copying was ordinarily conducted.”<sup>1</sup>

This commendation applies to the middle ages at whose hands we receive by transmission the literature of the ancients. At the same time we are obliged to take note of a great amount of fraudulent matter

<sup>1</sup> Taylor, *Transmission of Ancient Books to Modern Times*, 20.

emanating from the writers of that very period itself. The presence of both good and bad is not strange, for that is also a characteristic of this modern so-called scientific age. The situation calls simply for alertness of mind for the distinguishing of the two. Some classes of material were more susceptible to falsification than others because the rewards of fraud were more seductive.

Assuming that we have a work or document before us for criticism, the order of procedure is logical and plain. If the matter in question purports to be a mediæval manuscript the investigator appeals first to the tests of palæography. The chirography of every epoch of European history has been so carefully studied that it is possible to identify at least the period in which a genuine manuscript originated. The standard works upon palæography and diplomatics explain the forms of letters used at various times and in various countries. The materials employed, the form of the manuscript, the ink, the seals, the wrapper, and all other external facts have been so exhaustively classified that the expert can determine with considerable assurance the source of a written document. If it is a forgery, it is more than likely to contain slips in the imitation which will hardly escape detection in due time. The difficulty of discovery increases in proportion to the nearness of the forgery to the time or place of alleged origin, for the counterfeiter is then able to enter more fully into the spirit of the period.<sup>1</sup> The invention of printing did not destroy the possibility of fraud in

Order of Procedure.

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 44.

manuscript, for many public and private documents remain permanently written. The increasing rarity of ancient manuscripts, on the one hand, has furnished temptation to fabricate them for purposes of gain, and, on the other hand, the inducements to forge legal documents are so great that the act has to be repressed by the criminal laws of every country today.

Forgery.

The fabrication *en bloc* of an extensive historical work has not been common. One is more likely to meet with shorter portions of history, memoirs, biographies, or letters which are doubtful. Furthermore, a large amount of the material now known to be false does not pretend to be original handwriting, but rather copied from manuscripts said to be no longer extant. The risk of immediate discovery is much less when the writer alleges that he had access to originals now lost or destroyed. Whether the document assumes to be original or not the proof of genuineness is not limited to the palæographical data, but the textual evidence of language, of formalities, and of statement must also be employed.

History of  
Croyland.

A pertinent example of the forgery of local annals is found in the history of Croyland Abbey. This purports to be a chronicle of that monastery by a Norman abbot named Ingulphus, covering about the period 625-1089, and embellished with numerous charters and privileges. Although exception had been taken earlier to certain parts, the work as a whole was accepted as authentic history up to the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Since that time the earlier part of the chronicle has been



proved to be a forgery of the thirteenth or fourteenth century. The method used in reaching this conclusion is interesting and instructive.<sup>1</sup>

Of this history no manuscript earlier than the sixteenth century is in existence, and no original manuscript can be proved to have existed at any time, although writers of the seventeenth century claimed to have seen an autograph, which was afterward destroyed by fire. Consequently, no palæographic tests could be used in modern times and the external facts about the document had to be proved by study of the contents. Suspicion first laid hold of the charters quoted in the work. It was observed that Latin terms were frequently employed which came into use one or two centuries later than the alleged dates of the documents. Closer analysis showed that there were attributed to the Anglo-Saxons not only words, but institutions, which are otherwise known to have been first introduced by the Normans. The writers made use of feudal terms unknown in Britain before the conquest, and these words, moreover, were placed in charters alleged to be of an early Saxon period. In most cases the documents were brought forward by the author to show the great antiquity of the property rights and privileges of the monastery, but they contained

<sup>1</sup> *Descriptio compilata per Dominum Ingulphum Abbatem monasterii Croyland, natione Anglicum, quondam Monachum Fonta.* Hardy, *Catalogue of Materials*, II, 58-64, 128-129 (Rolls Series), London, 1865.

H. T. Riley, *The History and Charters of Ingulphus*. *Royal Archæol. Inst. of Great Britain, Archæol. Journal*, XIX, 32-49, 114-133, London, 1862. *Dictionary of National Biography* "Ingulf."

expressions like *miles meus*, my knight; *manse-rium*, manor; *feudum*, fief; and many others which were not used at the alleged date.

**Anachronisms.** At first it was believed that the charters alone were spurious while the history could be regarded as authentic, but this view has long been abandoned, for the chronicle itself is full of anachronisms. It appears to be based on a part of the work of Ordericus Vitalis, one of the historians of the Norman Conquest, who visited Croyland in the early part of the twelfth century. His meagre outline was filled out with supposititious details, and wherever he suggests a possible occurrence the writers of *Ingulphus* supplied it. Whenever they strayed away from Ordericus they invented most marvelous tales, but at the same time they committed most egregious blunders in chronology. For example, to bridge over the period covering the abbey's foundation, the Danish invasion, and the election of the famous abbot Turketel, 948, the writers supplied a series of superannuated monks, called *Sempects*, who live in the house to the improbable ages of one hundred and sixty-eight, one hundred and forty-two, one hundred and fifteen, and one hundred and twenty years respectively. Turketel himself is spoken of as the king's chancellor and made responsible for the appointment of seven bishops on a certain day, when, in fact, the synod at which this occurred was held two years before Turketel was born. Another passage states that the "King's Justiciars" held court at Stamford in 1075. Such an official act is not otherwise heard of for at least a hundred years after that date. A

“vicarius” or vicar of a church is mentioned equally in advance of the age when the term was customary.

Many other citations might be made to multiply these misstatements and anachronisms which show

Object of the  
Forgery.

that the writers built upon and borrowed much of their narrative from late chroniclers like Henry of Huntingdon, Florence of Worcester, or Simeon of Durham. The motive of the forgery is clear. The monks desired to enforce their claims to property rights in dispute, and for that purpose prepared these alleged ancient charters, which they said were copied from originals no longer in existence. In order to reinforce the case they prepared also this history in which the claims are mentioned and incorporated, but they could not put themselves back into the spirit of the earlier ages. Words and expressions which were as second nature to themselves were transplanted into Anglo-Saxon times, while dates were confused and impossibilities asserted. From the character of the document the forgery has been placed either in the fourteenth or fifteenth century. How far it succeeded in deceiving the immediate contemporaries we may not say, but for several hundred years afterward the work was accepted as a genuine product of the eleventh century.

Forgeries of extensive annals and diaries have appeared from time to time throughout mediæval and modern history. The motives are chiefly two, literary notoriety or desire of gain. To be the finder and editor of a manuscript hitherto unknown and casting light on hitherto obscure portions of history is a coveted position. This led to frequent imitations

Reasons for  
Success of For-  
gery.

during the epoch of the humanists, notwithstanding the fact that the same period discovered many earlier frauds of venerable growth. The money value of ancient manuscripts has led to several notorious forgeries in the nineteenth century. The clever work of one Simonides, who pretended to have discovered in an eastern monastery most extraordinary manuscripts on Egyptian history, was accepted for a time by the highest experts. So long as human frailty exists, perhaps, we may look for such attacks on public credulity. The experiments will take new forms with each generation. Quite recently a printed book appeared under the title "An Englishman in Paris." The volume purported to be the memoirs of Sir William Wallace, at one time English ambassador in France. The work was so well done that considerable time elapsed before it could be proved that Sir William Wallace had left no such papers and that the memoirs were fabricated by a Dutch newspaper man. The public reads with avidity the genuine memoirs of statesmen and prominent persons like Talleyrand, Metternich, or Grant. Personal history, intimate conversations, hitherto secret details are sought for about every public man, and, doubtless, so long as these are expected the forger will supply them after death. In modern times, however, the supply of documentary evidence is so voluminous that detection is certain to follow soon, and the public is obliged to get this kind of amusement from books which are avowedly historical fiction. Briefer documents, like letters, charters, decrees, the acts of courts, councils or

synods, and business contracts in general were fabricated in great numbers during the middle ages. The question of genuineness will arise before the student in many of these yet. The reasons for the astonishing productivity of those centuries in base material will be discussed more appropriately later on, yet the kinds of fraud to be guarded against in documentary sources and some of the reasons for suspicion may be briefly suggested through studies of familiar cases.

Among the most famous examples of forgery was the so-called Donation of Constantine. This document alleged that the Emperor Constantine had granted to the bishops of Rome supreme authority over all churches in the world and temporal authority over Italy, or the rest of the western world. In token of this the emperor had removed his own capital to Constantinople. Various other privileges symbolical of this supremacy were granted to the papal chair at the same time, and additions appeared at intervals in later ages. Although this document must have been written in the eighth century the contents were never seriously contested until the fifteenth century, when three scholars fell upon it at once. Other centuries passed, however, before the belief was finally abandoned.

Another classic forgery of this period has received the name of the Pseudo-Isidorean Decretals. This is a collection of ecclesiastical regulations many of which are genuine. The first portion contains fifty canons or citations from the apostles on the government of the church, but these are followed by

Donation of  
Constantine.

Pseudo-Isido-  
rean Decretals.

fifty-nine spurious letters or decisions of the popes from Clement to Malchiades. Here also appears the Donation of Constantine, but this was probably quoted in the belief that it was genuine. All together there are ninety-four spurious documents in the collection, and the date of its composition lies somewhere between 829 and 857. In both cases the first suspicious circumstance is the late appearance of the documents. The Donation cannot be traced back of the time of Pepin, a point more than four hundred years after Constantine. The Isidorean Collection is first mentioned in a synod of 857, many centuries after the suspicious papal letters were alleged to have been written. Furthermore, the ninth century was a time when the ecclesiastical tendencies there contained began to be put into effect and were furthered by the appearance of these ancient citations. Both documents contributed to the power of the papacy. The Donation, however, is betrayed by the anachronisms in words. Officials and usages are quoted which are otherwise known to have originated much later than Constantine. Similar discrepancies appear in the Decretals, but these were overlooked in the uncritical middle ages. Since the Renaissance modern scholarship has given them up. The church itself no longer maintains the validity of these documents, but bases its claims for supremacy on other grounds.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Donation of Constantine. See Döllinger, *Papstfabeln des Mittelalters*, 1863. Fables respecting the Popes. Trans. by A. Plummer, edited by H. Smith. New York, 1872.

The Pseudo-Isidorean Decretals. Text in Migne, *Patrologia*,

In any document decided partisan bias, particularly when this does not fit into the sources in question, is a ground for suspicion, yet in the middle ages members of the learned classes, who were at that time exclusively ecclesiastics, did not hesitate to fabricate deeds, charters, grants, and other documents which confirmed them in rights of property or other privileges. The minutes of councils and diets were sometimes made to conform to the wishes of the persons benefited, or to increase the fame of an ecclesiastical foundation. Even the biographies of saints were subject to much invention and alteration. This was due partly to the natural exaggeration which follows the traditions of great and pious men, and partly to the business methods of unscrupulous clergy. The virtues of the patron saint of a church were frequently writ large, and if his relics were present their powers of miracle-working were usually most extraordinary. The transportation of the saint's remains across country, the "translatio" as it was called, was accompanied by marvelous manifestations of healing power and subversions of the usual laws of nature. Consequently, the whole body of the "Acta Sanctorum" has fallen into discredit notwithstanding the grains of truth which are to be gleaned from these sources. The unfortunate desire to magnify the reputation of a sanctuary, to increase the number of pilgrims and consequently

Vol. CXXX. See also McClintock and Strong. Encyclopedia, sub voce Decretals.

A. Giry. Manuel de Diplomatie, 871, seq.  
Toussaint et Tassin. Nouveau Traité de Diplomatie,  
Vol. VI.

the revenues of the place, threw a vast amount of spurious material in the way of the later his-  
Hence, it is safe to say that when unusual, n-  
lous, or otherwise incredible means of discove-  
transmission are alleged for a manuscript or  
ment or relic, in order to explain the late appe-  
of it, there is ground for suspicious inquiry.  
In modern times the forging of letters is confined  
to the classes who are willing to risk criminal pu-  
nition in order to draw money from others,  
carried on by literary schemers who profit  
from the gullibility of autograph collectors.<sup>1</sup>

#### Epigrams.

If proverbs, epigrams, or brilliant sayings were  
an important part of historical material one  
would spend a long time in enumerating the inventions  
and distortions of words which have been put  
into the mouths of great men. A critical juncture  
in a hero's life seems bound to produce a witty or  
philosophical epigram. The unities of time and  
place call for a brilliant thought and the den-  
dits are likely to be supplied. Men have said appro-  
priate things at the right time, but so many have  
invented for them that all have to be scrutinized.  
The inventions might be harmless if they were  
often put forward as explanations of character.  
But in a flash of lightning the man with his  
ambitions is revealed in a telling phrase, but

<sup>1</sup> Within recent years wholesale forgeries of letters  
attributed to Robert Burns have been exposed in Scotland.  
The forger was a careful student of Burns and his times, but  
did not escape from mistakes which led to his detection.  
It has been said that if Burns wrote all the letters ascribed to him  
he must have had a pen in his hand every minute of the  
seven years of his life.



of these fine sayings belong to the class of afterthoughts, or what the French have called "L'esprit d'escalier."<sup>1</sup> These are the things which one might have said, but only thought of while on the way down stairs after the affair was over. Many an inspired epigram has come to mind too late, and so in history many afterthoughts have been added to the real events. Consequently considerable caution is in order before accepting these sayings, however characteristic they appear to be, even when they have passed for truth for a long time.

Ancient historians were accustomed to insert at intervals in their chapters long speeches ascribed to their statesmen and other acting characters. On the eve of battle the general was represented as standing before the army and addressing the ranks, or upon an important occasion in the city the statesman moved the populace with a more or less extended harangue, ostensibly reported in the words of the speaker. Machiavelli in writing of the ancients follows their example, but the impossibility of the preservation of such stenographic reports is so apparent that no one has taken them seriously as such. Possibly the authors would have disclaimed any intention of giving a verbatim report, yet the question arises as to what shall be done with these portions of the narrative. Notwithstanding the apocryphal character of the words, the speeches have

Invented  
Speeches.

<sup>1</sup> The Germans translate this expression into "Treppenwitze," and an interesting collection of afterthoughts in history is found in Hertzlet, *Treppenwitze der Weltgeschichte*. The author is unnecessarily iconoclastic but the cases cited are valuable for study.

value as giving the opinions and comments of the writer. Where the modern historian, particularly of the eighteenth century, would have devoted a paragraph to moralizing, the ancient writer gives a view of the situation in the speech of a great man. Where Macaulay describes the grave question confronting William III as he was about to come to England to claim the throne, an ancient historian might have given space to a long monologue by William himself or by one of his advisers. A speech of this character, whether otherwise authenticated, may be looked upon as a literary device, rather than a malicious fraud. Its value as source material is naught, but there is a certain interest in observing what the early thought might have been said, or what the nature of the circumstances required.

**Fabricated  
Genealogies.**

The list of written sources subject to falsification is by no means exhausted in this brief review. Genealogy has offered a tempting field for invention and genealogy, which is in fact a condensed biography and family history, has led many into the realm of fantasy and fraud. Pious kings and potentates may be excused for thinking that their race descended from the gods, but the desire to maintain a long line of ancestry has yet disappeared from the world. A man's pardonable pride has led to the perpetration of innumerable frauds. In the feudal period the possession of property and honors depended largely on descent, hence the temptation to fabricate was enormous. Under the old régime in France

tion from taxation was a perquisite of nobility, and any number of patents were obtained by collusion and fraudulent representation of long descent. In modern days the genealogical tree is cultivated chiefly as an aid to social prestige, and many a family line is assumed without due respect to the facts. Indeed, throughout history there has been a tendency to magnify the importance of the ancestor and to claim him with confidence. There are great numbers of families with well established descent through long periods of time, but in many cases of undoubted validity there are at certain periods visible weaknesses in the connecting links. The person who has followed his family back to a point where the connection is in doubt is under great temptation to bridge over a difficulty by assuming a relationship because of a similarity of name or because the ascent appears to lead to noteworthy people. The weakness of many American genealogies lies at the point where they cross the Atlantic. The compiler with a certain degree of conscientiousness will say that "James Roe was *said to have been* a son of Richard Roe, at one time sheriff of Nottingham," and will then proceed to mount by another, perhaps authentic, genealogical ladder to the thirteenth century, or to William the Conqueror. Families and even professional genealogists have been too easily satisfied with connections which lack exact proof. The adoption of a family tree or the assumption of a coat of arms is no longer a serious matter to the historian in America from the documentary point of view. Except as a social phe-

Weak Points.

nomenon of more or less amusing interest the subject does not afford much material. Occasionally it is important to know the time, place and origin of a conspicuous personality, and then the tracing of the genuine family connection will be in order.

**Interpolation.** The foregoing pages have considered chiefly the forgery of whole documents or of other historical materials, but, as a matter of fact, one of the chief sources of trouble lies in the partial falsification of otherwise good papers by the insertion of words, phrases, or paragraphs. Sometimes words are added innocently by way of comment and may be judged simply on their value as explanations. As a working rule one may well adopt the definition of Bernheim that interpolation is the interjection of new matter for the purpose of deception,<sup>1</sup> which makes the act a minor form of forgery to be viewed in the same moral light and under the same canons of criticism.

In an original manuscript the presence of a different hand is naturally a highly suspicious circumstance. Modern courts of law accept with difficulty additions made even by the same hand; much more cautiously will the investigator consider words written in different ink, or signs of erasure, or evident attempts at imitation. At times the imitation will be so accurate as to require very careful comparison with the remainder of the context before the interpolation will be detected. The matter is rendered still more difficult by the fact that when a manuscript was copied the interpolations were often innocently incorporated in the text. The addition

<sup>1</sup> Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode*, p. 373 (1908).

is thus apparently obliterated, but suspicion then arises from some internal evidence of language, or some possible distortion of sense. The order of procedure is to compare all available texts to see if they also contain the suspected clauses and to follow back to where the change begins. This rule applies sometimes to printed works where later editions vary among themselves and from the original manuscript. The language of the suspected portion should be compared with the remaining text to determine whether the grammatical connection is natural or not. The interpolator will at times run risks in order to give a sentence a different meaning and evidences of distortion are frequently encountered.

The contents of all parts should also be in harmony. If a clause or paragraph conflicts with other statements, or is abruptly thrown into the narrative without reasonable connection, or if it reveals a special aim or tendency foreign to the text, there is reason to suspect an interpolation. The degree of guilt to be ascribed to the interpolator is a matter which may be difficult to decide. The chronicles and documents are replete with additions of which some were made with the clear intent to deceive. Others were incorporated in the texts because they agreed with later events or doctrines, and still others, like the anecdotes and the myths, because at a later day they were believed to be characteristic, or perhaps true.

The external criticism of products of art has to do with the genuineness of the picture or statue itself, rather than with the truth of the view painted or

Forgeries in  
Art.

chiselled. It belongs to archæology to decide whether the relief is truly Assyrian; and whether the picture really emanates from Gainsborough in the eighteenth century is a matter for experts to decide. In neither case can general directions be prescribed, since the characteristics of each age are peculiar. The historian may find it necessary to determine the quality of these sources for himself, and if so there is but one general rule to prescribe: he must make himself thoroughly acquainted with the artistic instincts of the period, or with the peculiarities of the artists, before pronouncing judgment.

Forgeries of  
Relics.

The products of man's hand have been imitated for purposes of deception in innumerable cases. Every branch of archæology has its peculiar trouble, for human curiosity is so insatiable that the market for antiquities increases rather than grows less, and the temptation to satisfy the public with fabricated relics is difficult to withstand. Statues, vases, coins, medallions, inscriptions, weapons, and all forms of household implements have been put forward as originals. Even human bones have been falsely certified and the grave is subjected to forgery. The remains of saints were in greater demand than the middle ages could supply and the faithful were sometimes deceived with the arms or legs of less holy men or of animals. The accounts of such attempts at deception would fill volumes, furnishing a mournful commentary on human character in all historic periods. Erasmus was not the first nor the last to complain of superabundant holy spears and pieces of the cross. The modern traveller in the lands of

the ancients, whether it be Italy, Greece, Egypt, or Babylonia, is beset with offers of antiquities which have every appearance of genuineness, so clever are the arts of imitation. The object is always pecuniary, for the fabricators have no particular desire to be known as antiquarians. Consequently it is unsafe to purchase without extensive knowledge, for the Roman coins can easily be molded and cast, while the terra-cotta gods may turn to red clay with the touch of water. Each branch of archæology has its own troubles, and no rules for detection will apply to all. As in the case of the bank teller who is on the lookout for counterfeits, the best preparation is the constant study of genuine specimens. Then the senses will be keen to note any variations from the regular product.

In the field of anthropology some very suggestive principles are presented by one of the leading members of the United States Bureau of Ethnology. These are intended for the guidance of the student of prehistoric man, his implements and method of life, and are put in the form of presumptions, or hypotheses for further proof. When an object is found or presented for consideration the first step is to test its genuineness. This is to prevent error as well as to detect fraud, and the questions which must be answered have to do chiefly with the situation in which it was found and the other objects with which it was associated.

Prehistoric  
Relics.

First, it is a fair presumption that things found on the surface of the earth and on the bottom of waters are modern.

Second, that any object found in a rock shelter

above a stalactite floor is modern. Caves and rock shelters are but things of an hour in geologic time.

Third, that any stone object of doubtful origin is natural. Wear, rounding, and polishing are all possible by natural causes. Every form of cleavage is found naturally.

Fourth, that any unusual object found within or apparently within an unconsolidated deposit is an adventitious inclusion.

Fifth, that an isolated case of association is adventitious. Many examples of the same phenomenon are necessary to prove that traces of man are found in a given geologic formation.

Sixth, that an incongruous association is accidental. A neolithic implement found with extinct fauna is presumably exceptional.

These postulates are not final and may be outweighed by collateral evidence, but they should be very carefully considered.<sup>1</sup>

An obvious deduction is that the student himself when finding objects *in situ* should take precautions against his own errors by noting with exhaustive care the surroundings and associations of the relic. As we proceed it will be seen that these data are also of vital importance in the interpretation of the historical truth to be derived from this class of materials.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. J. McGee. Some Principles of Evidence relating to the Antiquity of Man. American Antiquarian, XIII, 69-78.

<sup>2</sup> On the fabrication of antiquities, see Paul Endel, *Le Truquage: les contrefaçons dévoilées*. Paris, 1884.

Robert Munro. *Archæology and False Antiquities*. London, 1895.

For a modern instance in American antiquities, see N. Y. Nation, June 16, 1910. Letter from C. G. Kelsey.



The testing of certain portions of historical material requires the aid of several highly specialized branches of learning. Palæography and diplomatics with the closely related subjects chronology and sigillography are the chief auxiliary sciences upon which external criticism must depend. It may not be necessary for every investigator to be an expert, but he should be acquainted with the elementary processes by which historical data are clarified and established. The principles of these sciences follow here in brief outline, not as a substitute for a course of study, but for the purpose of showing the nature of the reasoning by which their conclusions are attained.

## CHAPTER IV

### PALÆOGRAPHY

FOR the investigation of history previous to the fifteenth century a knowledge of the forms of writing employed during that part of the Christian era is absolutely essential. After the invention of printing palæography is of diminishing importance, yet commands attention for several centuries more in the field of documents and official records. The period of the Renaissance was a witness of two phenomena of great intellectual interest. First, the written alphabets of Western Europe finally attained the general forms which now exist, and, second, literature past and present was placed in the keeping of movable type, a still more inflexible medium of communication. Both in the printed and the written alphabet the changes which have since occurred affected non-essential features.

Mediæval  
Writing.

Palæography consequently is for the most part a study of mediæval forms of writing. Ancient history may have been recorded and documented by contemporaries, but their works have come down to us with slight exception in the handwriting of the Christian centuries. Ancient inscriptions come within the domain of archæology because of the medium through which they are transmitted. Likewise the papyrus manuscripts of ancient Egypt and the terra-

cotta tablets of Babylon are so peculiar in their character that each has been constituted a separate branch of knowledge. This has happened because of the intense specialization of archæological pursuits, not because the subjects are unrelated, for in the comparative study of alphabetical forms the interesting fact has been discovered that our vocal symbols are descended from Egyptian hieroglyphs; that the Greeks obtained from the Phœnicians their letters as well as their weights and measures; and that, in short, the alphabets of the nations of the Mediterranean basin were all derived from a common stock of signs. The profound significance of this remote relationship for the interpretation of early history can be seen at a glance. Furthermore, in the study of the psychological history of vocal signs the primitive beginnings must be taken into account, yet the practical science of palæography resolves itself into a study of Greek and Latin writing, and for Western Europe it is still further confined to the Latin and its derivative languages. Since Latin was so completely the language of learning and diplomacy the Teutonic and English handwriting was also visibly affected by the Roman alphabet.

It might be debated whether language itself were more fundamental than the writing which expressed it, for the words must be deciphered before the meaning can be discussed, but this essential importance of the subject does not necessarily imply that every student of early modern history should become a palæographer. In the division of historical labor it is given to some to establish and print the text and

to others to combine and interpret, but it is important that all should understand the process by which the materials have been purged and set in order. In the last resort in difficult cases the investigator may be obliged to depend on the opinions of the experts, but he should be able to follow with understanding the argumentation by which the specialist reaches his conclusions.

Writing  
Materials.

To the historical student palæography is an auxiliary branch of knowledge for two very practical reasons. First, it assists in the primary tests of materials for proof of genuineness. On that account it is necessary to know the characteristics of writing in the various periods of its development and the peculiarities of any given time. Included in this field of study is the classification of the materials upon which writings were made. For example, papyrus was used for documents well into the Merovingian period, hence a deed written on that material and alleged to be of that period will have presumption in its favor. An undated papyrus offered as a charter of the tenth century would at once be suspected as a forgery. The beginning of the use of paper in Western Europe has been diligently studied, being known to the Arabs in the eighth century and coming into considerable use among Christians in the eleventh. Consequently a paper document assuming to come from the fifth century would have no chance of acceptance, and its true origin would be sought in the water-marks and texture of the material. Parchment does not in itself afford a clue to dates, for its use was common

in antiquity as well as in the middle ages, and specimens have survived from various early points in the Christian era. In fact, materials give only presumptive indication of a large period, for usages overlapped one another with gradual transitions, and the aid of handwriting and language is likely to be required to produce conviction.

The handwriting itself as a means of identification owes its usefulness to the vast amount of study devoted to it for the past century and more. Not only the interests of philology and literature have drawn attention to chirography, but the modern study of diplomatics has also organized and classified the materials for purposes of its own. Consequently the attempt has been made to fix as nearly as possible the chronological limits within which the various stages of writing prevailed. Let it be said at once that styles of writing like styles of material do not fix the day of the month, or even the year, but they do indicate with a measure of safety the large period within which a manuscript belongs. Within the larger divisions of style the peculiarities of individual writers have in many cases been identified and these have served to prove and explain unmarked manuscripts, particularly documents. Books were usually written in a studied hand which offered less opportunities for personal identification of the writer, but on the other hand the copyist very often appended his name and year in a colophon at the end of the work. Writing, therefore, assists materially as corroborative proof of the age and authenticity of historical materials, purely through external appear-

Palæography  
as an Auxiliary  
Science.

ance. Scholars have gone so far as to identify the time and writer by peculiarities in single letters, but the variety of practice on the part of the same writer at different times and at different stages in his own career do not generally warrant conclusions so exact. Fashions also overlap and change permanently only by slow degrees. Yet, with all these reservations, it is perfectly apparent that chirography was subject to a development which indicates from time to time the peculiarities of periods and peoples.

Evolution of  
Writing.

The more important reason for tracing the growth of writing lies in the comprehension of the script itself. The letters used at the beginning of the Christian era were slowly transformed into the alphabet of today. Sometimes fashion added a detail which later might be discarded, and, again, to the hasty glance a letter came out of a period quite different from the pattern with which it entered. Close study reveals, however, a basic form upon which these changes rest, and it is impossible to understand how this came to pass without knowledge of the preceding structure. It is of course quite possible to learn by rote the hand of a given period, but such a dilettante acquaintance gives no assurance of security. On the other hand the comparative study of earlier forms is not only more scientific in method, but actually facilitates the reading of the later script, for one can see the fundamental lines of a letter already known. In the handwriting of our friends the omissions and peculiarities often leave much to be guessed, but we make out the word, not only by the context, but because the proper forms of

letters of the alphabet are imbedded in our consciousness. So it is with the original forms in mediæval penmanship when studied in historical order.

It is quite impossible to give in short space a Roman Alphabets. treatise on Latin palæography, nor is it called for in this connection, yet a brief outline of the development of writing may serve to emphasize the importance of that auxiliary to history. The foundation of Roman writing was the alphabet of capitals used in monumental inscriptions, which for obvious reasons was composed chiefly of straight lines with angular connections. Letters of this kind were easier to grave with the chisel than curves. The size of the letters was guided by two parallel lines within which in a general way all of the symbols were confined and inscriptions maintained a regular and somewhat finished appearance. At the same time the needs of communication developed a less careful form of letters which were quickly made with a stylus on wax tablets, or with a pen upon papyrus or parchment. The letters of this Roman cursive are still based on capitals, but the rapidity of writing develops curves and enlargements which extend beyond the two line limits of the standard. Even in the more studied literary hand there came developed pass usages which were due to the reed or the pen. Not only the habit of making some letters longer than others arose, but while still remaining capitals the letters took on rounded corners and changed dimensions which were easier to write. The form was called "uncial" and is found in extant manuscripts Uncial. as early as the fourth century. It took precedence

of others in the fifth and continued in common use into the eighth century, but nevertheless remained a more or less formal hand with which writers in the course of centuries became impatient. Consequently the cursive habit took hold of the uncial and a period ensued in which a mixture of what approaches our "upper and lower case" type developed, and is called by the palæographers the "half-uncial."

**Minuscule.**

The book hand and the correspondence hand growing side by side finally developed the script out of which there grew further the national hands of Western Europe. This is the so-called "minuscule" which eventually became the medium of literature, both for informal and artistic purposes. The basic scheme is a limit of four parallel lines instead of two,       . Naturally when books were made by hand the letters followed these lines with precision only in the finest specimens, but the foundation idea is there, and once knowing of its presence it is easier to decipher the rough attempts to follow it.

Although we have here together the elements of modern alphabetic forms their history is not so simple. Each nationality presented variations with peculiarities differing from the others. Italy, Spain, the Franks and the Anglo-Saxons, each developed customs which need to be studied. At one time the Carolingian script became so corrupt that it was forbidden by law. The very difficulties offer certain compensations, for the language of literature was for the most part Latin during the middle ages, and the general basic forms of letters



were distinguishable in all, and at the same time peculiarities furnish the material for the identification of manuscripts. Complete uniformity would have made the test of materials even more laborious. As it is, the reign of Charlemagne gave an impetus to writing which perpetuated the use of the minuscule as the principal alphabet for three centuries with comparatively little change. Variations in script are noted at the end of centuries rather than decades, consequently the identification of unmarked manuscripts meets with increased difficulty and the sole testimony of palæography is not always fully convincing. Yet there is enough individuality in the various periods to give the expert clues for determination.

From the thirteenth to the fifteenth century Gothic extends a period in which there developed a hand since known as Gothic. For book writing it is a breaking-down of the previous minuscule through haste and the mingling of cursive forms, with a constantly increasing use of abbreviations and combinations of letters. The writing of charters indicates the same deterioration in care, particularly in the fifteenth century. The abbreviations render the texts more than ever difficult to interpret and writing takes on something of the character of a cipher code. During this period, however, the national hands enter upon distinct lines of development. From the Gothic cursive descends directly the German script of today, and from the Gothic minuscule is derived the ordinary German type. At the time of the revival of learning there was also a return to

the earlier and more beautiful forms of book letters, and upon the invention of printing in the middle of the fifteenth century these revived artistic ideas gave the examples to the first makers of movable type.

**Abbreviations.** It was stated above that abbreviations of words increased at a certain period, but abbreviations are found in all periods of Latin writing. Even the capital writing on the monuments contained occasional condensations, and the practice became common so early that the Romans themselves had little hand-books for reference. A collection of abbreviations was prepared for the Emperor Charlemagne, and ever since that time such aids have been neces-

$\overset{\circ}{p}$	(p <sup>o</sup> ) primo	xiii	$p^{\circ?}$	(p <sup>o</sup> ) propositio- nem	xv p.
$p^{\circ\circ}$	(p <sup>loo</sup> ) primo modo	xv p.	$p^{\circ\circ}$	(p <sup>oo</sup> ) poste- riora	xv m.
$\ddot{p}$	(p <sup>la</sup> ) personis	xiii f.	$\ddot{p}$	(p <sup>ae</sup> ) probatione	xv f.
$p^{?l}$	(p <sup>l</sup> ) possibilis	xiv f.	$p^{?o}$	(p <sup>or</sup> ) posterior	xv
$p^{?l}$	(p <sup>la</sup> ) possibile	xv f.	$p^{?l}$	(p <sup>or</sup> ) postero- rum	xv f.

Portion of a page from Cappelli, *Lexicon Abbreviaturarum*.

sary. In modern times attempts have been made to classify and systematize abbreviations with some measure of success, but, after all, to the palæographer it becomes a question of familiarity and memory. There was a reasonable amount of consistency in the use of abbreviations, but in many cases the same sign is made to serve numerous similar endings,

and the same word may be shortened in various ways, as *tempore* may be found in *te*, *tempe*, or *tpē*. Martin's *Record Interpreter* devotes more than one hundred and fifty pages to a list of Latin abbreviations found in British manuscripts and records alone. These naturally accord in general with mediæval practice on the continent, but the collection serves to show at the same time the intricacy of the subject.

To this must be added a system of shorthand, Roman Short-hand. originating also in classical Roman times and ascribed to Tiro the freedman secretary of Cicero. These peculiar abbreviations are formed out of characteristic strokes in each letter, a part standing for the whole. They continued to be used in connection with other writing, both in books and in charters, through the mediæval period. In documents the acknowledgment of the responsible official is frequently repeated in the Tironian shorthand, perhaps by way of added protection. Some of the signs were used in the regular abbreviations because compact and having a known meaning. Hence the peculiar marks which sometimes appear to be purely arbitrary signs.

On the whole the difficulty of abbreviations is not Abbreviations In Print. so formidable as it might seem from the outside. There was sufficient consistency in the signs to make readable a language like the Latin where the case endings and syntax were well established. With the help of the context the meaning is not beyond reach, yet upon the interpretation of these marks there has been plenty of opportunity for division of

opinion, particularly when the manuscript was not carefully written. As a subject of study abbreviations command great respect and any attempts to further classify and set them in order are to be welcomed. The matter cannot be left entirely to the palæographers, for many of the mediæval texts have been printed without extending the contractions, as may be seen in parts of the Rotuli Parliamentorum. To take a later example, the Valor Ecclesiasticus, authorized by Henry VIII in 1534, has in modern times been printed according to the original text and consequently many of the sections are presented in what appears to be cryptogramic form.<sup>1</sup> With a little knowledge of Latin abbreviations the matter is easily read. In any case it is well to be aware of the difficulties under which the interpreter of mediæval documents is placed and in case of dispute to be in position to follow the reasoning of the explanation.

<sup>1</sup> Extract from the records of the Curia Regis 9 Richard I, A. D., 1197-8. Fines, p. 10 (Record Commission). A judgment of court establishing title to land in Bedfordshire. Printed with the abbreviations of the manuscript.

Hec ⁊ final concord fca in cur' dñi Reġ apd Bedeford in die Scti Math anno regni Reġ Ric ix<sup>mo</sup>. corā G. fit Pet' Steph de Tornehā Sim de Pateshiff Joh de Gestliges Jacob de Poſne justiē ⁊ aliis baronibz ⁊ fidelibz dñi Reġ tē ibi p̄sentibz In Reġo fit Willi petentē ⁊ Sim fit Adele tenentē de j. acf lre cū ptiū i Mid-delton Uñ regniē de morte aīcessoris sūmōita fuit il eos i p̄fat cur scit qđ p̄dcs Sim regnoŷ totā p̄dcam lra cū ptiū ēē jus ⁊ heditatē p̄dci Reġo tenend de se ⁊ hediŷ suis sibi ⁊ hediŷ suis iŷpetuū p libum ŷviē ij. den p annū p omī ŷviē redd ad duos lminos anni scit ad festū Scti Mich j. den ⁊ ad Pasch j. den.

Bedef.

## CHAPTER V

### DIPLOMATICS

ALTHOUGH one may never devote himself to a period in which Latin documents are the rule, with the expectation of becoming an expert diplomatist, it is nevertheless essential that one should be familiar with the evidence and method by which conclusions are reached. Even for the reader who depends upon the printed copies it is necessary to know the construction of documents and the practices of chanceries, so that he may distinguish between what is formal and what is freshly communicated. For even if it is left to the palæographers to determine whether a document is genuine or not, there are certain parts of the paper which are historically more valuable than others, and the student should be able to decide what are merely notarial repetitions and what are expressions of will, or relations of fact. As in the case of the writing, each period had its peculiarities of expression, varying slightly from its predecessors. These have been so carefully studied that documents may be identified and dates established in large measure by the evidence of form. The office practice of every reign in the mediæval empire has been classified by modern scholars, and by the combined application of palæography and diplomatics the

world has been put into possession of a mass of sifted materials which were inaccessible to the earlier historians.

Chanceries.

At the foundation of any study of diplomatics there must be a comprehension of the nature of the offices in which documents were customarily prepared. The chancery of the mediæval German empire had a historical development which is interesting enough as a branch of administration, and which at the same time is of decided importance in explaining the character of documents from period to period. For example, under the Merovingians the chancery was a body of copyists who signed papers as witnesses indiscriminately. Under Charlemagne the inner organization became more strict. A chief of the office appeared, for whom the others sign as "vice." This official became in time the most influential about the court, and as the empire grew archchancellors were required for Germany, Italy, and Burgundy. These offices were sought and claimed by the greatest ecclesiastics in the realm. At the same time the actual preparation of imperial documents was carried out in the office of the cancellarius, or Kanzler, of the immediate court of the king. The names of the great archbishops may be signed to the documents, but only as a formality. In fact, the chancellor's signature ceases to be an autograph and the instrument rests upon the inspection of an office, rather than a person, just as it was with the stamping of the seal. Nevertheless it is most important for the investigator to note which of these high officials records his signature, for if the

name of the archchancellor of Italy appears at a certain time, the king must have been for the moment in that territory. So likewise for Germany and Burgundy. These and other similar data affect both the legality and the historical inferences to be drawn, and show that both for the external criticism of the document and for an understanding of its contents a knowledge of the rights, duties and practices of the chanceries is essential.

The kings of France and England each had officials of a similar character, but the practices and position of the office were just enough different to make it unsafe to draw inferences one from the other. Without going further into the history of the matter, the evidence is clear that the official source of an instrument is a preliminary of vital importance. For English history the groundwork is admirably prepared by Mr. Hubert Hall in his "Studies in English Official Historical Documents," in which the system of record-keeping and the nature of the documents issued from all of the great departments of the mediæval state are classified and described.

The word document, like the German "Urkunde," is used so frequently for anything that serves for testimony that the term must be more narrowly defined. For the purposes of diplomacy a document is a paper written in regular form which testifies to a legal transaction. This excludes many smaller communications like letters, announcements, or other memoranda which in a general way are popularly called documents. Yet the legal instru-

Document,  
Definition.

ment may take the form of a letter. It is the effect of the paper which determines its character.

Another distinction which is important for the exact limitation of diplomatics lies between the document which actually creates a new legal relation and the notification which announces that such an act has taken place. An example of the first is a direct deed of land to a monastery or to a private citizen. "I the king grant to N..... prior of the abbey of M..... the lands and tenements hereinafter described." Such a deed creates the new ownership and until the paper is signed and properly attested no legal act has taken place. This is the "carta," in the strictly technical sense. On the other hand the king may issue a document to this effect: "Know all men by these presents that we have granted to the monastery of ..... the lands hereinafter described." This is the "notitia" or writ. This document furnishes as good title to the property as the former, but is not the act itself. It is a confirmation of a deed already performed.

Carta and  
Notitia.

To the legal historian it is interesting to follow out these distinctions because they throw light on the processes of law, but also to the student of more general affairs it is important to know the nature of the transaction, because the time and place of the document may depend on its nature. The writ or confirmation may not instantly follow the carta, and the side lights and minor inferences to be drawn from the instrument may be decidedly modified by the nearness or remoteness of the transaction.



So also the method of preparation of the document may vary with its character and thus give different data for proof of genuineness. The words *carta* and *notitia* became somewhat confused in the usages of the later middle ages, but the actual distinctions remained in practice, so that the investigator is called upon throughout to reflect on the character of his instruments, and the diplomatist finds in these distinctions the key to many difficulties of identification and interpretation.

The documents with which diplomatics is concerned differ widely in purport and contents. The forms used are manifold in respect to their minor details, but throughout the whole body there appear usages in arrangement and expression which are capable of classification. Writers in this field of learning differ somewhat in their terms, but certain typical parts of documents are commonly identified. These may not all be found in the same paper and a different order may be pursued at various times and places, but the distinctive features must be kept in mind if the instrument is to be interpreted with profit.

Subdivision of Documents.

In every legal document there are two grand divisions. One consists of the "text" or main body of the instrument which contains the substance, or statement of what is transacted. The other part contains the details which introduce the *dramatis personæ* and identify the time and place of the action. This latter division is the "protocol," and as part of it comes at the beginning and part at the end it is sometimes further classified as the

Protocol.

"protocol and eschatocol," or the initial protocol and final protocol. The initial protocol is subdivided as follows:

**Invocation.**

1. The Invocation. This is an expression of the name of God either by a symbol or by words, or by both at the same time. The earliest form of



Chrismon  
Anno, 815.

the symbol was a cross and this usage was followed consistently by the papal chancery. The initials, or the labarum  $\text{X}$ , were also used, hence the name Chrismon, used in German diplomatics. This monogram in the Merovingian and Carolingian documents becomes a fanciful twisting of lines based on a motive of C, the origin of which had apparently been forgotten, but which was still regarded as an act of reverence. So much individual ingenuity was displayed that the Chrismon becomes a very useful factor in the identification of particular scribes.

There was also considerable variety in the verbal invocation, of which the following are examples:

In nomine domini et sanctæ trinitatis.

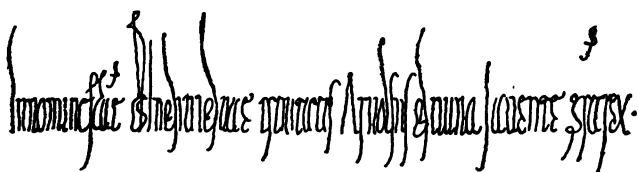
In nomine domini Jesu Christi dei æterni.

In nomine sanctæ et individuae trinitatis.

Usage was, however, so persistent in different chanceries that the slow changes from period to period can be noted and the formulæ made to assist in the identification of documents.

2. The Title, *Intitulatio*, contains the name and Title. style of the grantor, possibly with a formula of devotion, such as:

Carolus gratia Dei rex Francorum et Langobardorum; Fredericus divina favente clementia Romanorum imperator et semper augustus; Ego Cnud, per Dei misericordiam basileus; Ego Edwardus, Dei indulgente clementia, Angulsaxonum rex.



In nomine sanctæ et individue trinitatis Arnolfus divina favente gratia rex.

Invocation in a charter of Arnolfus, anno 889. Much reduced from fac-simile in Leist, *Urkundenwesen*.

3. The Address, *Inscriptio*, giving name and titles Address. of the person or persons for whom the instrument is intended.

4. The Greeting, *Salutatio*. In a charter granted Greeting. by Pope Paschal II to the Emperor Henry V address and greeting read:

Karissimo in Christo filio H. glorioso Teutonicorum regi, et per Dei omnipotentis gratiam Romanorum imperatori augusto, salutem et apostolicam benedictionem.

The foregoing divisions when present are usually The Text. found at the beginning of a document, so that if one follows the order of the reading the main body of text is the next topic to be considered before proceeding to the other external features. The text itself

contains important sections which must be regarded separately. Not all are found at the same time in every document. Sometimes one or more are omitted and occasionally two are so blended as to make one sentence, yet if a document were to be written for the purpose of showing all the forms which might be encountered the following subdivisions would be found in the text:

**Arenga.**

1. The Proem, or Arenga, gives some general motive for the issue of the document. It is usually an expression of piety or an obvious statement of some well-known truth, as in the following selections:

"Since we perceive not with deaf ear the gospel: blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the sons of God." "It is becoming to the imperial dignity not only to preserve inviolate the pious deeds of his predecessors, but also by the exercise of his authority with all haste and solemnity to commend into perpetual remembrance, lest that which was graciously granted and irrefragibly established by sainted emperors to the praise of God for the necessities of the church and the welfare of the provinces, by the passage of time or any other cause should become doubtful or uncertain." (Frederic I, 1168.) "We hope that felicity in the present life and blessedness in eternity will attain unto us if we do not neglect to defend and maintain in liberty the churches constructed by our ancestors." "Since the flight of time causes forgetfulness in men." (Breslau, Centum Diplomata, p. 104.)

*Ab humana facilius labuntur memoria, que nec scripto nec voce testium consignantur.*

*Quoniam gesta mortalium labuntur cum tempore.* (Basel, Urkundenbuch, 1244.)

2. The Publication, or Promulgatio, is the phrase Publication. by which the act is announced, for example:

Notum sit omnibus ac singulis.

Notum igitur omnibus tam præsentis quam futuri temporis fidelibus.

Notum sit omnibus fidelium nostrorum magnitudine esse volumus.

The promulgation is not always present and the phraseology when used varies widely with different writers.

3. The Narration states the reasons for the issue of Narration. this particular document, and the space given to the explanation varies widely. In certain forms where the receivers have laid earlier documents before the grantor for confirmation the narration may contain valuable history of the transaction, and may even be the key to documents and events otherwise unknown.

A subdivision is sometimes made by designating as Petition. the Petition that part of the Narration which indicates the person or persons who requested the grant. This may have been the grantee himself or some one who handed in the petition in his behalf. It is often difficult to separate the petition from the narration and the study of the subject brings forward the so-called "intervention." This appears in German imperial documents from the tenth century and exhibits the persons who urged the king to gracious action:

Otto III, 994 . . . quomodo nos ob amorem et interventum dilectæ aviæ nostre Adelheidis videlicet imperatrices Augustæ.

Otto III, 1001 . . . interventu nostri consilarii Cumani episcopi.

Henry II, 1004 . . . per interventum delectissimæ nobis conjugio nostræ Cunigundæ.

Henry IV, 1074 . . . ob interventum principum nostrorum Liemari videlicet Hammaburgensis archiepiscopi, Ebbonis Nuimburgensis, Diederici Wirdunensis, Gunzonis Eichstatensis episcoporum.

Other terms in time came into use. Consilio, consultu, consensu et consultu, are words which show the tendency to make this function important, and eventually the intervenientes develop into witnesses necessary to the validity of the document. The history of that feature, however, must be omitted here.

#### Disposition

4. The Disposition is the declaration of the will of the grantor. It is the kernel of the document, the legal act to which the other formalities give protection. As to form, the writer was less bound by rule than in other parts of the instrument, consequently to the diplomatist the disposition is more difficult to use as a means of identification. There was greater freedom of expression and the language differed as widely as the objects of the documents.

It should be said also that the grammatical construction of the narrative and disposition are entangled in many different ways. All may depend on the presence or absence of the publication formula, or the narration itself may be wanting. From the legal point of view the disposition may depend on the statements made in the narration, especially when older documents have been brought forward for corroboration. The recital of facts and desires having been made, the disposition may say, as it

were, "in view of the foregoing we decree," etc. This complication, as already noted, multiplies the number of points of historical interest.

5. The Sanction, or *Comminatio*, is the penal Sanction. clause with which the non-observance of the act is threatened. This may be temporal or spiritual. The king may simply indicate his displeasure, or may fix a definite fine:

Conrad II, 1037. "If any one therefore is tempted to be a violator of this our precept, which I scarcely believe, let him pay one hundred pounds of the best gold," etc.

Canute. "Whoever shall attempt to infringe upon or do injury to this my donation, let him be excommunicate before Almighty God and every holy church."

Edward, 1061. "Whoever shall guard this donation with benign intention of mind shall be crowned, adorned and glorified with eternal blessedness; but he who with evil genius desires to divert the same, let him be condemned to the fires of Gehenna, if he is not called to repentance."

6. The Corroboration is the phrase which gives Corroboration. notice of the authentication by the signatures which follow. This is always at the close of the text of the document, but the forms are various:

"And that this instrument may remain firm we confirm it with our own hand and sign with the impression of our ring."

The writers upon the diplomatics of Germany, France, and Italy have been continuously engaged in the study of the various parts of the text and have carefully classified the different usages. So many are the variations that it is difficult to establish rules for

any period, but still there is a general resemblance in each epoch and country from which the scholar may after long practice obtain the feeling. One might think that parts like the narration would be so different in every case that little could be gathered from them concerning the provenance of a document, but this very fact is one which enables the expert to identify in many cases a particular official by individuality of style. Without the palæographical testimony of the original document the evidence may not be entirely conclusive, but by way of corroboration the usages are very important for identification.

**Final Protocol.**

As noted above, the formalities of the beginning and the end of a document are vital to its authenticity. Without them the instrument had no value in law in its own day and to the historian it would be a nameless scrap of paper or an unanswerable riddle. Therefore it is in order to consider now the signatures and the date, with other factors in the final protocol.

In an official document note must be taken of:

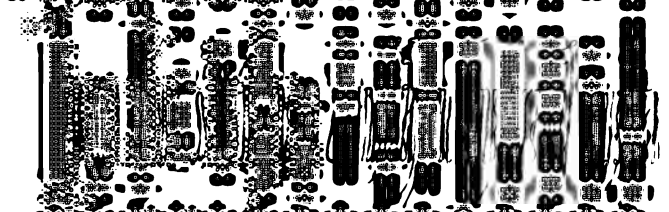
1. The signature of the grantor, king, etc.
2. Signatures of chancery officials.
3. The signature of persons who witness or consent to the act.

**Signature.**

In the proof of authenticity the palæographical evidence is naturally the chief dependence. Even when kings could not write but only signed with a cross, or added a mark to a monogram fashioned by others, the practice of the particular period still furnished a standard for comparison. For the German Empire the diplomatists have collected the forms of words used in each reign, taking note



...a ...  
 ...th ...  
 ...ai ...  
 ...ac ...  
 ...ed ...  
 ...of ...  
 ...of ...  
 ...e ...  
 ...so ...



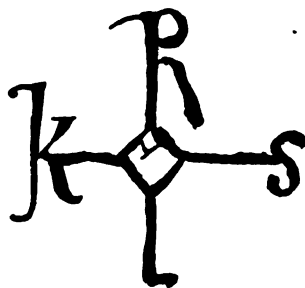
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 ...or ...

...ne- ...  
 ...and ...  
 ...the ...  
 ...to ...  
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Monogram.

gram, and the practice was kept up for a long time after kings and emperors, like the Ottos, were abundantly able to use the pen. The autograph appears in due time and then the monogram returns in the later middle ages as a form of ornament.

The signature of the chancery official is a legal authentication of the grantor's signature or authority. When the royal signature was only a mark



Monogram of Charlemagne, anno 794. The king's signature is the cross line within the diamond. Facsimile full size.

this recognition was essential, but the office grew in importance until for various reasons of state it became indispensable. In the study of German diplomatics the terms of all known chancery officials have been as far as possible tabulated, so that the fraudulent use of their names may be detected.

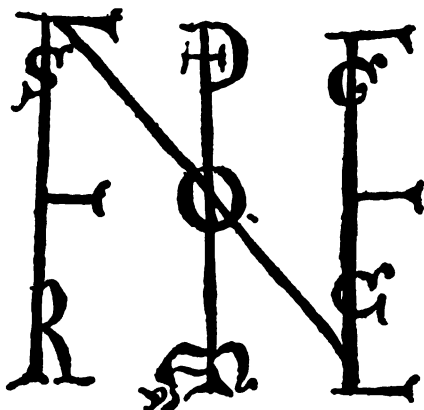
Witnesses.

The signatures of witnesses are interesting for many reasons. These were regarded in the earlier period as intercessors and indicate who were the influential persons about the court, as may be seen from the use of the word *interventu*, or *consilio*. Gradually these names became part of the corroboration, and public documents follow the example of

private papers in calling them witnesses, but the rule is loosely followed and the names may at times be present without the actual signatures.

The document of King Edward, 1061, already cited, contains signatures as follows:

Ego Giso Dei gratia episcopus hanc cartam dictavi  
+ Ego Edwardus rex sigillum imposui + Ego  
Stigandus Archiepiscopus laudavi + Ego Hereman-  
nus episcopus corroboravi + Ego Leofric episcopus  
affirmavi + Ego Willelmus episcopus consolidavi +



Monogram of Emperor Frederic I (Barbarossa) anno 1156.  
Facsimile size of the original.

Ego Aegelnodus abbas confirmavi + Ego Aegelin  
abbas laudavi + Ego Haroldus dux + Ego Tostig  
dux + Ego Aelfgar dux + Ego Gyrth dux + Ego  
Brihtric consiliarius + Ego Aelfgar consiliarius  
+ Ego Aegolin minister + Ego Everwacer minister +  
Ego Esegar minister + Ego Rotberd minister +  
Ego Rauf minister + Ego Bondi minister + Ego  
Eilferth minister + Ego Eadmer minister + Ego  
Aelsie minister + Ego Aelfget minister.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kemble Cod. dipl., IV, 150.

## CHAPTER VI

### CHRONOLOGY

THE date is the most indispensable single factor in a document, from the historical as well as from the legal point of view. Names and contents may serve to indicate the general period in which the instrument was issued, but something more exact is required to give the proper connections. Diplomatics concerns itself with the forms of words used in the various periods and countries, and calls in the aid of the science of chronology to elucidate the systems of time-reckoning. Two objects, also, may be included in the study of the date. One is to determine from the formula employed whether the document is genuine, since usage differed from period to period and in the various countries. These forms have been classified with even greater care than other portions of the document and have become an important means of identification. The other object is to determine what the real or intended date actually was. This latter problem is by no means the lesser of the two, for the indications are often abbreviated or incomplete, or mistakes in calculations were made by the scribes themselves, or equivocal phrases were used which leave the date in doubt. A knowledge of the systems of time calculation employed in the middle ages is therefore indispensable

in this connection. Not only to the student of diplomatics but also to the general reader of mediæval and modern history is an understanding of chronology of the highest importance, for the chroniclers and biographers make continual use of time expressions which require explanation, and the analogies of modern times would be misleading. For a systematic treatment of chronology the reader must be referred to the standard works on that subject. Space will be given here to only a few of the problems which lie within the larger modern period of history.

The western world has fixed upon a date for the beginning of the Christian era, yet the earlier centuries of that very era were unaware of such a starting-point. It did not occur to anyone to make a calendar dating from the birth of Christ till he had been more than five hundred years in the grave. Emperors had become converted and Christianity had been made the official religion of the Roman empire, yet time was still measured by the calendar of Julius Cæsar, and periods were marked by consulates and reigns as in ancient times. An era dating from Diocletian had come into some use with memories of the Christian martyrs, but until the fall of the empire there was naturally a harking back to Roman institutions. In the century following that political collapse a Christian monk came upon the idea of an era dating from the birth of Jesus Christ, which he computed to have taken place on the twenty-fifth of December of the year of Rome, 753. Modern calculations based upon astronomical and other data

Mediæval  
Chronology.

have found this date erroneous, the discrepancy according to different writers being from two to six years too late. This question, however, does not affect the marking of time in history, for the calculation of Dionysius was accepted and modern years are still counted from that point.

Adoption of  
Christian Era.

The adoption of the Christian era, even after its invention, was painfully slow. No council or decree ordained its use, but merely by the spread of example the year of the incarnation came into use through ecclesiastical channels first in Italy. In France the Christian year appears in private papers in the eighth century and in Germany in the first part of the ninth. In public documents it remained for the later Carolingians to introduce this form of dating somewhere toward the close of the ninth century, and the papacy itself, the chief representative of that religion, did not use the era of its founder till near the close of the tenth century. Both kings and popes had been designating the year of their reigns as sufficient indication of time, with perhaps another foothold in Roman practice. This was the indiction, a recurring period of fifteen years used by the later emperors for purposes of taxation. It was introduced into the calendar by Constantine in 313, and remained in use for a long time afterward.

Indiction.

The indictions were not numbered like the ancient Olympiads, consequently there is nothing in the term by which to establish the year. In dating a document it was customary simply to give the number of the year in the existing indiction, therefore a calculation is necessary to find the Christian year

if it is not otherwise given. Examples will indicate the variety of usage.

A charter of October 25, 775, depends upon the reign of Charles alone:

Datum VIII kalendas Novembris, anno VIII et ei regni nostri. Actum Duria palatio publico. In Dei nomine feliciter.

Under Hugh Capet, June 20, 989, an indiction is included:

Data XII kalendas Julii, Indictione II, anno II regnante Hugone rege. Acta publice Parisius urbe.

Pope Innocent II, 1139, March 1:

Dat. Laterani per manum Aimerici sanctæ Romanæ æclesiæ diaconi cardinalis et cancellarii, kl. martii, indictione IIa, incarnationis dominice anno MCXXVIII, pontificatus vero domno Innocentii pape II anno X.

Pope Honorius III, 1219, December 12:

Dat Viterbii, II idus decembr. pontificatus nostri anno quarto. Here the date must be found from outside information as to the beginning of his pontificate.

Bishop Henry of Basel, 1233, August 15:

Dat. Basilee, anno dominice incarnationis millesimo ducentesimo tricesimo tercio, octavo decimo kalendas septembris, indictione sexta.

To find the indiction in which any given year belongs subtract from it the three hundred and twelve years which had elapsed when the system started and then divide by fifteen. The remainder is the current number of the year in that indiction.

$989 - 312 = 677 \div 15 = 45$  and 2 remainder = Indiction II. Difficulties arise with this item when attempting to calculate closely to a date because of the fact that three different starting-points for the indiction were employed: September 1, September 24, and January 1. It is therefore necessary to be acquainted with the practice of the chancery in question. The most that can be said for the indiction is that it adds corroboration to what has already been stated in another way. When the use of the Christian year became common it was a superfluity which served only for the decoration of the document.

Regnal Year.

As to the employment of the year of the reign the chief difficulty lies in the point of beginning. This might be the day the sovereign was designated king, or it might be the day of his coronation, and again if elected emperor another new count might begin. Different systems were actually employed at the same time and in consequence a great deal of trouble has fallen upon the investigator who has been obliged to study out the chronology of the writer in hand.

Beginning of Year.

Likewise the beginning of the year itself has been subject to complications. The Roman year with its twelve divisions remained steadfast throughout the middle ages and suffered but little change in the reformed calendar of Pope Gregory in 1589. The numbering of the days, however, and the beginning of the year passed through a varied history. The Roman year began on January 1, and so also did the original calculations of Dionysius, the inventor of the Christian calendar, but theo-



logical opinion entered into the question. Monastic chroniclers began to interpret the word *incarnatio* as the day of the conception, or the feast of the Annunciation, and therefore fixed the beginning of the year at March 25. Others preferred the day of actual nativity as the realization of the *incarnatio dei*, and so constituted December 25 as the beginning of the year. From another religious point of view the resurrection was the most important day of the year and the chief object of calendars and time calculation was to determine the day on which that movable feast occurred. Consequently it was quite natural that many should consider Easter as the most appropriate beginning of the year. This date was much used, especially in ecclesiastical matters, and the investigator is frequently confronted with a problem requiring careful observation, for if the date is in January, February or March it may be counted in two different years. If the year 1420 begins January 1, the date February 15 will be in 1420, but if the year begins in March the same day will be counted in 1419. The Gregorian calendar with its other corrections abolished this confusion by fixing upon January 1 as the first day of the year, but the nations did not all adopt the plan at the same time, hence the period of adoption for each country must be kept in mind.

England declined to change until 1752. From the seventh to the thirteenth century in that country the year began for everybody with Christmas. In the twelfth century the church began to reckon the year also from March 25. In the fourteenth century

The Year in  
England.

both laity and clergy came to use that date. At the same time the historical year was understood to begin with January 1, for the course of events was not forgotten, but the legal year, both civil and ecclesiastical, counted from March 25. Public laws, proclamations, church regulations and all other official transactions depended upon this latter date. The use of two standards caused great confusion and inconvenience, but even after the rest of the world had adopted the reformed calendar the English people, rather than accept a scientific improvement at the hands of a pope, endured the annoyance for two centuries more until the reign of George II. This double year accounts for the double dates frequently employed in books written since that time. For instance, Charles I was beheaded on January 30, 1648, or 1649, according to the point of beginning, so for the modern reader it is written January 30, 164<sup>8</sup><sub>9</sub>. This is to be interpreted as

1648. = Civil legal year beginning March 25.

1649. = Historic year corresponding to modern reckoning.

In certain parts of Europe, due to Byzantine influence, September 1 was made the beginning of the year, and other peculiarities of reckoning make the subject decidedly complicated. The elucidation of the problem depends not only upon mathematical chronology, but more particularly upon the close study of usage in literature and documents. The calculations of Easter and other church festivals did not require an extraordinary amount of skill on the

part of the mediæval clergy, but it is not always clear how long a given practice continued or what system was actually in vogue at a given time and place. To the experts in diplomatic chronology the historians are indebted for calculations and tables which render their pathway easier.

The months continued to hold their classical names **The Months.** throughout mediæval history except in certain regions where descriptive terms like *Heumonat*, *hay month*, *Brachmonat*, *fallow month*, etc., indicate provincial usage. The Roman designations of the days continued to be used with varying frequency, and with some relation to the source and solemnity of the document. The Merovingians, for example, had in their time become accustomed to the continuous numbering of the days as we have it now, but if the document happened to be written on the first day of the month, or somewhere in the second half, the appropriate *Calends* might be used. In the time of Charles the Great, however, the Julian Calendar again displaced all other methods of counting days, and this practice continued to the close of the twelfth century to be the one most commonly used. A period ensued in which it became the practice in the imperial documents to omit the day altogether, and in France in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the designation of the day was generally thought unnecessary. Later on the days reappear and we come to the modern practice of numbering them consecutively throughout the month.

The holy days and anniversaries of the church **Holy Days.** formed a most convenient body of dates and afforded

on the whole a safe means of identification. The movable festivals for the most part depended upon Easter and that could occur on any one of thirty-five different days. These combinations have been worked out in tables and form an important portion of all treatises on chronology. The fixed festivals have also been tabulated with great care, and yet there were conflicts in usage in different parts of Europe. The familiar holy days of the prayer-book form only a portion of the possible feasts, for there are more than a thousand saints for the three hundred and sixty-five days in the year and there are often several saints or martyrs of the same or very similar name. Consequently the investigator must be assured of the form of calendar employed at the source of the document.<sup>1</sup> The use of festivals was condensed somewhat by giving the number of the week-day before or after a holy day, as: *feria secunda proxima post sexagesime*; the next Friday after St. Scholastica's day, etc.

**The Introitus.** There also came into practice the designation of a given Sunday by the Psalm which was prescribed for that day. This was the so-called dating by introitus, or opening words, of the selection. Since this was practically an invariable schedule, the identification of the day was secure, and, as in other cases, week days could be designated as before or after. For example, on the first Sunday in Advent the opening words of the psalm are, *Ad te levavi*; second Sunday in Advent, *Populus Sion*; third

<sup>1</sup> See the local calendars printed in Grotfend, *Zeitrechnung des Mittelalters*, Vol. II.

Sunday in Advent, *Gaudete in Domino semper*. The fourth Sunday in Advent appears in a document as "*in dei dominica qua cantatur Memento nostri*." The Monday after Whitsuntide is doubly fortified by the naming of the psalm, "*Uff dem nechsten Montage nach dem Weissen Sonntage, als man in die heil. Kirchen singet zu Latein Invocavit*." Thus every day in the year could be marked by its relation to a Sunday which itself was known by a fixed portion of the church service. The practice might include the opening words of the lessons or some rubric of the breviary as well as the psalms, as *Vidua Naim*, the widow of Nain, Luke 7, for the seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost, or, *Reddite cesari que sunt cesaris*, Matthew 22, for the twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost.

The measurement of the hours of the day in two divisions of twelve hours each came down into the middle ages from Roman antiquity, but owing to the rude instruments employed there was great irregularity in the systems in various regions. For practical purposes the divisions of the day were made to conform to the canonical hours by which the order of the church services were rendered. The hour of sixty minutes was not unknown or forgotten, but not until public clocks became common in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries did the modern expressions come into regular use. Starting from the division of the night into four watches of three hours each, the designation of time was soon marked by the services assigned to these *vigiliæ*. There was considerable divergence in the

Hours of the  
Day.

observation of the canonical hours in relation to the twelve-hour day and night, so that one cannot calculate to the minute on the data given in the documents, but the practices were all based on the primary divisions which follow:

Matutina, originally from midnight to 6 A. M.

Prima, 6 A. M. to 9 A. M.

Tertia, 12 M. to 2 or 3 P. M.

Nona, 2 or 3 P. M. to 4 P. M.

Vespera, 4 P. M. to 7 P. M.

Completorum, final service of the day about 7.

In the course of time certain of the services were sung together with a consequent change in the beginning and ending of the period. In general this resulted in the pushing back of all to an earlier point, so that in common usage the chief periods of the day came to be Prima, Tertia, Nona and Vespera. Nona was the period of the mid-day meal, but one should not imagine a fixed hour for that ceremony over all Europe. When the canonical hours are mentioned we arrive only at an approximate notion of the time of day. For the writers of the time that was sufficient, and for most purposes it is all that we require to know. For particular cases the help of the chronologists is at hand.

Hours in  
Documents.

Citations from documents of various dates show the use of these terms<sup>1</sup> and illustrate other diplomatic topics already touched upon:

Anno dominice natiuitatis MCCLV Indicione XII die VI Septembris inter nonam et vespas.

Actum Ianue Ante ecclesiam sancti Mathei. Anno

<sup>1</sup>From Italian sources printed in *Studi Medievali*, Vol. II Fasc. 1, 1906.

dominice natiuitatis Millesimo ducentesimo quinquagesimo sexto. Indictione terciadecima. die vicesimatercia madii. inter terciam et nonam. Willelmus pictauinus Iudex. et enricus Aurie.

Actum Ianue in platea que est ante ecclesiam sancti Matthei anno dominice natiuitatis MCCLVIII indictione secunda die XV Octubris pulsante ad vespervas.

Actum Ianue in domo Iohannis Bonihominis de suxillia qua habitat Iohannes busnardus de sexto notarius. M. CCLXIII<sup>o</sup> indictione sexta die Vltima Novembris in sero siue in crepuscolo testes Iohannes busnardus de sexto et Ansaldus brignonus.

Actum Ianue Ante domum canonicorum sancti laurentii qua habitat Willelmus de ualle. speciarus. M<sup>o</sup>CC<sup>o</sup>LIIJ<sup>o</sup>. Inditione X.<sup>a</sup> die XVI<sup>a</sup>. Aprilis post nonam. Testes thomas lomellinus et Willelmus ususmaris.

Actum Ianue ante domum canonicorum sancti laurentii qua habitat Willelmus de valle speciarus. M<sup>o</sup>CC<sup>o</sup>LIIJ<sup>o</sup>. Inditione X.<sup>a</sup> die XXVIIIJ<sup>a</sup>. Aprilis Ante terciam. Testes petrus bixia de campo et Iacobus de besso de sauro.

Actum Ianue in porticu domus thome Aurie testes Barcha Aurie et Ianuinus sartor M<sup>o</sup>CC<sup>o</sup>LIIJ<sup>o</sup>. Inditione XI. die quarta decembris post nonam et duo instrumenta unius tenoris inde fieri rogauerunt.

The revision of the calendar at the instance of Pope Gregory XIII was demanded on account of the discrepancies between the astronomical year and the ordinary reckoning. The year had been counted as exactly three hundred and sixty-five days six hours long when in fact the final day was eleven minutes fourteen seconds shorter. In the course of one hundred and twenty-eight years of sun reckoning this amounted to one day of deficit, and in three hundred and ten years of moon cycles

Gregorian Calendar.

the deficiency would also be one year. The task was to cover these discrepancies by adding days in such a way that sun and moon calculations could start even again. The accounts in 1582 were balanced by the addition of eleven days to the calendar, the point being fixed by the bull of Pope Gregory at October 4, which should be called October 15.

As already stated, the adoption of the plan was very irregular, the Protestant Germans holding out till 1700 and the Protestant English till 1752. Suffice it to say that the transition period brought out an expression in dating which sometimes causes confusion. Not only was it necessary to take note of the change of beginning of the year, but it was customary to mark the old time as well as the new by giving one date as Old Style and another as New Style. These terms are frequently encountered in the English literature and documents of the eighteenth century. In fact, in order to determine accurately an elapsed time crossing over from the old to the new it was necessary to state whether the figures were old or new style. The difficulty lies not in the addition of eleven days when the term "O. S." is given, but in remembering to inquire what system is being used when no sign is employed. Calculations in years which have elapsed since the date of the adoption of the calendar in any country naturally give no trouble. It only needs to be ascertained when the new order went into effect.

French Revolutionary Calendar.

One other attempted revision of the calendar need only be mentioned, namely, that of the French Revolution. The application of this extended over



but one nation and that for a few years only. The change from the Gregorian order was designedly radical because the revolutionists desired to obliterate all connection with the past. They provided an astronomical basis of twelve months of thirty days each, with days of ten hours of one hundred minutes, but the nomenclature was a mixture of classic, realistic, and revolutionary terms so absurd that it could not last. It took effect from the twenty-second of September, 1792, as the beginning of the Year I of the Republic, and remained in force until abolished by Napoleon I. The Gregorian calendar resumed its place by law on January 1, 1806. During this period French public documents bear the official dates, but the system met with great popular neglect, to say the least, as it was difficult to change old habits, and France was singular in the midst of a Gregorian Europe. In converting the dates of French documents into common usage there are but two methods of procedure, either commit the calendar to memory, or keep a comparative table constantly at hand.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SEAL OF THE DOCUMENT

DURING more than a thousand years of mediæval and modern history there is likely to be found in the final protocol of legal and official documents an emblem known as the seal. The use of such devices goes back into a still remoter antiquity. Egypt and Babylonia from their ruins deliver up for study not only the marks of seals but the instruments themselves. The Romans used a seal when they desired to protect the contents of a message, and so one may find precedent enough for the employment of these signs, but the study of the seal is of interest to the historian chiefly for the middle ages and modern times.

#### Mediæval Seals.

The earliest extant documents containing seals date from the Merovingian period. The seal itself may not have survived, but the mention of its presence or the marks on the parchment show that it was affixed. Just when the practice began may not be determined, but the history of its later progress has been carefully followed by the authorities on diplomatics. As kings became less able to write and the monogram grew in intricacy and extent of use, the seal increased in esteem. Even while the signature was present the emblem gained the precedence to such an extent that in the Caro-

lingian period the seal rather than the sign manual was decisive for the validity of the act. In the thirteenth century the seal itself is spoken of as the "chirographum," showing the conception of its value, as if it were the signature itself. Cases might be cited where the signature is not called for, the names of the parties being evident only in the protocol or text of the documents.<sup>1</sup>

The materials used for the seals have been metal or wax down to recent times when the impression of the die began to be made directly upon the paper. Materials of  
Seals.

<sup>1</sup> *Ut autem hæc rata et indivulsa permaneat, sigilli nostri impressione firmavimus.* Basel, Urkundenbuch, I, No. 26, Anno 1155.

*Ut autem . . . perpetue firmitatis robur obtineat, eam nostro capitulique nostri sigillis confirmamus.* Basel, Urkundenbuch, I, No. 126, Anno 1233.

The first of the documents was issued by Adelbero, Bishop of Basel, and the second by Bishop Heinrich and the Cathedral Chapter more than a century later. In both of them the lettering on the seals exhibits clearly to whom they belonged, and the examples occur alongside of others where signatures are also used. The evidence of the superior weight of the seal is clear for a long time afterward, as may be seen from citations which follow:

Agreement between the cities of Basel, Freiburg and Breisach in 1349. ". . . das dis stête und feste belibe, so hant wir die vorgebant stête von Strasburg, von Basel und von Brisach unserre stetten ingesigel an disen brief gehenket." Basel, Urkundenbuch, IV, No. 183.

Anno 1461. Sworn report of an official of Basel as to military expenditures. "Und des zu urkund habend wir der official obgenant unsern hoffs ingesigelt offennlich tun hencken an disen brieff, . . ." Basel, Urkundenbuch, VIII, No. 147.

Anno 1481. The mayor and city council of Basel appoint a superintendent of public works in a document fortified by a seal without signatures. "Und dz wir meister Hannsen in vorbegriffen form zu unnerem werckmeister uffgenomen, des zu urkund habenn wir unnser stet secret insigel offennlich tun hencken an disen brieff, . . ." Basel, Urkundenbuch, VIII, No. 615.

Papal documents from the middle ages onward have been confirmed with lead seals, and from these "bullæ" the name "bull" has become as firmly attached to such a paper as the seal itself. Lead was used fitfully in Western Europe, but for the most part beeswax was the material employed. Sealing wax of the resinous character used now was invented in the sixteenth century, about which time wafers also appeared. Gold seals originated in the eastern empire and appeared in the west of Europe with the Carolingians. This metal continued in use for highly important documents down to the Emperor Maximilian. The seals consisted of thin plates of gold struck separately for each side and soldered together, or slipped into one another like a pill-box. A protecting box of wood was commonly provided for seals of gold, as was the case also when wax seals became massive in later times. The wax used at first was pure beeswax, but later this was mixed with cheaper materials, like pitch, flour, linseed oil, and turpentine, while colors of various kinds were added. Color was sometimes a matter of privilege. In the fifteenth century red wax was permitted to favored persons by royal grant. Up to that time red had been retained exclusively for royal or imperial seals.

**Attachment of  
Seals.**

In the earlier period the seal was attached directly to the parchment by its own adhesive qualities. Later this was made more secure by cutting a hole in the document so that the wax could stick to both sides. This was particularly effective when slits were cut in the form of a cross and the flaps turned back so as to become embedded in the wax. As time

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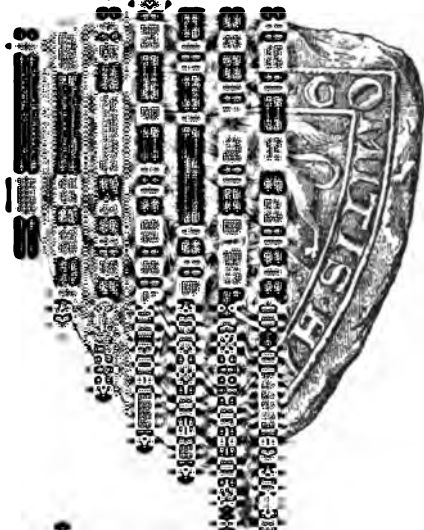
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the world in

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 time, a dedicated  
 body of people

## SEARCH

strings, but the various and different governments have furnished the investigator many clues in the form of documents. The study of the usages adopted for the various coins on the fancies



of Kyburg, 1234. (Gar

of a given period, but once discovered the genuineness of the coin may not always be certain. It at least add weight

extreme care with which collectors have been classif

by the writers upon the auxiliary sciences. So far as possible they have noted the usages of all of the important chanceries, and have stored up the matter alongside of the palæographical data. Attachments are found to include the stamping on the face or on the back of a document; or the seal may be tied in the face, or it may be tied in such a way as to close the document. For the most part when tied they are attached to the face of the parchment. Experience taught some things about the durability of the fastening, and so different ways of piercing the parchment appeared. Colored threads were made either of silk, linen, wool, or hemp, and might be plain, twisted, or braided. Cords also were found in the same variations, and the ribbon form was not without examples. Identification goes even to the color in the strands of cords and braids.

Great variety appears also in the forms of seals. *Forms of Seals.* Down to the middle of the twelfth century they were round or oval, but afterward any one of a dozen shapes might have been seen. Flat oval, pointed oval, shield-form, heart-shaped, triangular, square lozenge, oblong, clover leaf, and cross are among the number. No rule determines the class of persons or documents entitled to use these forms. In general, however, the pointed oval shape was adopted by the great ecclesiastics, the religious houses, and sometimes by cities and princes. The feudal laity naturally adopted the shield form as symbolical of their profession, but the rule is by no means invariable. After the close of the middle ages the round form came back into more general use.

## SEARCH

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Counterfeits were made, or the genuine seal could be used through the negligence or corruption of the responsible officials. Sometimes genuine seals were removed from good documents and attached to forgeries. Consequently the historian needs to give attention to this feature of his original document, first, in order to be assured that the transaction had in its day the validity of the law, and second, in order to test the genuineness of the document, which might have passed for legal at some time and yet have been a forgery. It is chiefly for the latter reason that the study of the forms, materials, methods of attachment, and other particulars have been classified with such care by the experts in sigillography.

In the earlier history of seals when the wax was *Impression*. made to adhere directly to the document the impression was naturally printed upon one side only. With the appearance of pendant seals there came the opportunity for double impressions, which led to further complications in official practice. Both sides of the wax commonly bore devices relating to the same person or authority, but it might also happen that one side bore, for example, the emblem of a royal office of state and the other side the inner or secret seal which authorized or guaranteed the authenticity of the first. No two governments or princes followed the same practice, consequently there are no general rules by which one may obtain the key to the meaning of a given seal. The inscriptions on the wax must be followed up with thorough study of the offices and departments of that government. Not only does the authenticity of the document

depend in part upon the proper seal, but the interpretation of it rests entirely upon the nature of the authority which put it forth. The historical student is, therefore, compelled to acquaint himself with the rights and duties of the persons or offices whose papers he examines, in order that he may weigh the legal value of an act, note the progress of a plan, or place the responsibility for an event. The importance of this may be seen in all works upon diplomatics and with special clearness in Mr. Hubert Hall's "Studies in English Official Documents," where the public offices of each great period are carefully tabulated and analyzed.<sup>1</sup>

#### Heraldry

Heraldry in modern times has become a branch of decorative art. No legal rights are established by the possession of a coat of arms. A family which has borne for centuries a certain device may be proud of it as an heirloom, but as evidence of property or privilege it cannot stand alone. Anyone may invent for himself a coat of arms to suit his fancy without interference from colleges of heraldry, and if one assumes to appropriate the arms of others he may do so with impunity, except for the smiles of his friends or the sarcasm of the comic papers. The matter has, in fact, become so much a subject of humor at the expense of the socially ambitious that it is difficult to realize that heraldry was ever more than an elaborate trifle which people took seriously. It was, however, throughout a long period of time an almost essential feature of feudal society and was carefully protected by law.

<sup>1</sup> See also below, Chapter xvii, on Administrative Documents.

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## Privileges.

In course of time this privilege extended itself over broader ranges of personalities. From the higher nobility it pursued its way through the lower ranks of that order into the artificial classes established for royal ministers, judges, and other high functionaries, with whom came also the princes of the church and eventually important citizens of towns, who perhaps harked back to a noble descent. Provinces and territories developed legal rights in their coats of arms from their particular feudal relationships to empire and kingdom. City corporations ordinarily carried in their seals along with some architectural emblem the arms of their feudal superior, who might be of princely or of imperial rank. Bishoprics, monasteries, and other ecclesiastical foundations were subdivisions of the feudal system from which military services or taxes were due, and their seals bear first the arms of the person who might be at the time in charge, but eventually here also there developed a corporation heraldry. The great military orders, like the Templars and Knights of St. John, naturally bore distinctive coat armor, because the members were taken from the noble classes and the order itself possessed territorial rights. Eventually the monastic orders as such, the Benedictines, Dominicans, and others, also maintained the exclusive right to the use of chosen emblems. Finally, gilds, as purely secular trade associations, as soon as their right to representation in city councils had been recognized obtained the legal right to heraldic seals, but the development in law was less pronounced in this field.

From the point of view of historical criticism the history of heraldry is important because the investigator must know when the rights and privileges of the blazonry of the given seal begin and expire. With this information he is armed with one more defense against forged or misplaced documents. Sometimes other factors in the document are defaced or missing while the heraldic design may furnish the clue to the contracting parties. For the ordinary investigator the services of the experts in heraldry may be required for difficult cases, but the elements of the art form a convenient possession for any student who expects to come in contact with documents.

The technical language employed in the description of a coat of arms is a highly artificial vocabulary which developed during the flourishing period of the system at the hands of professional heralds. The terms used in English are mostly of French origin and some of the words have become obsolete in other connections, but with one obvious advantage, that the terminology is similar for all of Western Europe. The different nations developed various tastes in employment of emblems and in the application of ornamentation, but the heraldic use of colors, the divisions of the shield, and other principles of the art are common to all. To indicate colors in engravings by the use of lines, either vertical, horizontal or crossed, there has been a uniform system since the eighteenth century, but to treat of the principles of heraldry even in outline is beyond the intention of this chapter. It must suffice to point out that the

Heraldry and  
History.

Technical De-  
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historical significance of the institution is very great. Practically, it is not difficult for the investigator to be prepared to interpret a description of a coat of arms, or to appreciate the historical and artistic value of its pictorial representation, whether impressed on a seal, painted in a miniature, or carved upon a tomb.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE TIME AND ORIGIN OF SOURCES

IN the problems of external criticism it frequently occurs that a chronicle or a document makes no reference to its origin, and the investigator is obliged to employ indirect means to establish the date, the place, or the author. The procedure is a part of the general test of materials, and the processes of finding the author, the time, or the locality usually take place concurrently. The search for one item reveals points about the others, and the solving of one question may depend on the results of another. Here also the mental processes of the investigator are closely interlocked, but for the purposes of analysis and discussion the three questions may be taken up separately.

The reasons for wanting to know who the author may be, or for determining when and where the document originated, should be constantly held in mind. The search is not mere curiosity to establish a name by which the paper may be known, nor, on the other hand, is it an absolutely essential duty that any author's name should be attached to historical writings. We are merely looking for means by which to establish the credibility of the witness in hand. A name is a means of identification from which we may proceed to look into the qualifications of the

The Search for  
the Author

person as a reporter of impressions. There is no obligation on the part of the investigator to attach personal labels to his materials, any more than it is his duty to vindicate the characters of the names he may meet. Yet it happens in the nature of things that the possession of a name furnishes one of the most valuable keys to the other items wanted. Because the name is a convenient means of showing the writer's relation to other things, his position in the world, his nearness to the event, and other essential qualifications, the investigator attempts to find out who this person was. An anonymous communication would be exactly as good if the personal relations of the writer to the facts could be ascertained without the name:

The Time of  
Documents

Logically speaking, the time when a document was produced is as essential as the personality of the author, because it is important to know how soon after the event the account of it was produced. This is true even when the author is known, but in the anonymous case, the time having been ascertained, the task of finding the responsible writer is decidedly reduced. The general period to which a document belongs is not usually the difficult part of the problem. There are characteristics sufficiently distinct between the great divisions of history to make the larger classification comparatively simple. Obviously, a manuscript recovered from the ruins of Herculaneum could not have been written after the destruction of that city in 79 A. D., but the problem is usually more minute. We are usually looking for evidence that will mark the period more definitely than an occa-



sional cataclysm of the elements which might affect the preservation of the document. In a large way, one may say that printed material is not to be expected before the middle of the fifteenth century, but the determination of the exact year of the article, or book, is the task which presents the difficulties.

In the case of manuscripts the auxiliary science of palæography is the first to be called upon. The methods of this branch of learning having been treated more fully in another place, it is only necessary to recall at this point that the writing of the various periods has been so carefully classified that experts can, with considerable certainty, determine at least the century and in many cases the place and the narrower epoch. At the same time this evidence ought to be controlled by the state of the language and the literary style. Certain general notions can be obtained at once, and by close examination a nearer approach will often be revealed. Literary expressions have had their history. Philology has in many instances fixed the limits within which words have had their day and died. Of this evidence of words an example was to be seen in the criticism of the history of Croyland already cited.<sup>1</sup> Yet the usages of terms do not bring the matter into close proximity with a date. This is not evidence with which to determine months or years, but rather a period or a generation. One might say that the word "boycott" did not come into use before the birth or manhood of the Irish landlord who bore that name, but there is no telling just when the noun became an active verb,

Evidence of  
Words.

<sup>1</sup> Page 26, above.

nor how long it will remain a part of the English vocabulary. One should be grateful, however, for indications which show the point before which an expression was out of the question.

**Natural Phenomena.**

The incidental facts mentioned in a narrative may likewise give a clue to the date of its composition. When earthquakes, floods, or other natural phenomena are cited, the dates may be learned perhaps from more exact authors. Eclipses may be calculated by astronomy. Battles and other incidents are sometimes mentioned as remote or recent events. Persons are referred to as living or dead. Monuments or buildings may be mentioned and the known date of their erection will indicate the period of the document. The absence of all reference to an important matter where one would naturally expect to find it may at times be used as an argument in fixing a date, but the positive reference is far safer evidence. One cannot always be certain that the omission is due to lack of knowledge.

**Documents in Series.**

An undated document may show by its contents that it belongs to a series, or connects with one or more whose dates are known. The British Calendars of State Papers contain many undated letters and papers, some of which were signed by the writers and some were not. They are often without indications of the place of origin, but the contents so correspond to other known letters, or the sequence is so natural and necessary, that the editors have been able to fix dates or authors with great probability.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See also Halliwell, *Letters of the Kings of England*, p. 321 and note.

The best mode of procedure is to determine, first, one of the limits before which, or after which, the document could not have been written. The other extreme should then be sought, and when the time after which it could not have appeared has been found it will be easier to approach the probable intermediate date. A case in point is a determination of the date of Cicero's *De Legibus*, gathered from internal evidence.<sup>1</sup> In that work the demagogue Clodius is mentioned in two passages as if not living. (*De Leg.*, II, 42.; III, 21.) Consequently Cicero must have written after his death, which according to Mommsen occurred on January 13, 702, A. U. C.<sup>2</sup>

Cicero's *De  
Legibus.*

With this point as a *terminus post quem* it is found further that Cicero in the course of the same work advocates the introduction of a new law to restrict the existing unlimited freedom of debate in courts of law. (*De Leg.*, III., 40.) Such a law was introduced by Pompey with reference to the trial of Milo, and is mentioned by Tacitus in his *Dialogues*. (Ch. 38.) Pompey was placed in position to bring forward such a law by his election as sole consul on the twenty-fifth of February, 702 A. U. C. Milo's trial began April 4, 702.

Cicero clearly wrote his essay before the promulgation of the law. Being a public man and constantly in the courts, he was in position to know of such an important change. Moreover, if he had known that Pompey had brought forward the project, he would

<sup>1</sup> Alfred Gudemann, *Philologische Wochenschrift*, July, 1892.

<sup>2</sup> Mommsen, *Hist. Rome*, Bk. V, ch. 8. *Grand Encyclopedie* gives 20 Jan., 52 B. C.

have mentioned the fact, because he actually praises Pompey for other legislation in the same way. (I Leg., III, 22.) The terminus ante quem is therefore the trial of Milo, and the date of *De Legibus* must safely be placed between the death of Clodius and the prosecution of his rival; or between January 13 and April 4 of the year 702 A. U. C.

## CHAPTER IX

### DETERMINATION OF AUTHORSHIP

THE process of finding the time and place of origin will prepare the way to find the authorship of an anonymous source. The more narrowly are determined the limits of time and territory within which the document must have been written, the smaller becomes the choice of authors. The responsible person may perhaps then be found, either by direct evidence of personal characteristics and interests, or by the elimination of all other possible authors.

The same inquiries used in the former cases must be made regarding language, style, and treatment, but the authorities agree that it is difficult if not impossible to establish general rules by which the personality of the author may always be identified in his writings.<sup>1</sup> Men vary at different periods of life, and style may change with the subject treated. Their idiosyncrasies are so personal that no one is competent to decide a question of authorship who is not thoroughly saturated with the other productions of the supposed author and his contemporaries.

Frequently the writer drops incidental hints as to his own origin or occupation without intending to do so. An expression of opinion may reveal the

Incidental  
Hints.

<sup>1</sup> Bernheim, p. 400, (Ed. 1908). Bresslau, *Urkundenlehre*, I, 583, etc.

class to which he belongs, or the standpoint from which he views the events described. If these indicate that the author must have been a soldier, a monk, or a government official, the field of inquiry is narrowed to the list of those of that rank who could have reported on those events. Whether or not the name of the author is actually determined, any details of his position, class, or views may be important because they indicate his value as a witness.

Quotation.

Quotation by other writers may give a clue to the time or authorship of a document. Since a record or letter must have been written before it could be cited we may approach in this way the terminus ante quem of its appearance. If the quotation gives the name of the author cited we may suppose that the original writer was once known. Possibly only fragments without name remain. In accepting any ascriptions of authorship, however, one must remember the possibility of error on the part of the man who quotes. The memory does not always fit the quotation to the right author. Carelessness and mistakes in citation are to be found even in the most critical ages.

Isaac Taylor points out various forms in which quotation may help to prove authorship. 1. Literal quotations, whether the author's name is given or not. 2. Incidental allusions. 3. Explicit mention of an author with criticism or description of his work. 4. Treatises on particular subjects in which all writers who have handled the same topic are mentioned in the order of time. 5. Controversies,

polemics backed up by citations. 6. Translations, especially when made near the supposed time of the author.<sup>1</sup>

An instructive example of the problems to be met in determining authorship is found in the chronicle known as "Flores Historiarum," long ascribed to "Matthew of Westminster." This furnishes a case of error in which the labor of the critics has been chiefly negative, but none the less important. Modern investigation shows clearly that the name was given to this chronicle about one hundred and fifty years later than the date of the earliest known manuscript, and that the work itself was the product of several compilers in succession. The earlier part was taken chiefly from the chronicles of Matthew Paris and was written at St. Albans. A continuation was carried on by several hands at Westminster, and in the course of time this combination of facts grew into the belief that a "Matthew, monk of Westminster," had written the whole work. Early modern critics were led astray by a title affixed to a manuscript of the fifteenth century. Matthew of Westminster was a creature of the imagination and his chronicle is a composite of nine parts.

The first part, covering the period from Creation to 1066, is not only a transcription of Matthew Paris, containing citations from other authors, but every little while there are incidental paragraphs to the glory of St. Albans. The same thing occurs in the second part (1067-1250), as when the compiler mentions the intention of Louis VII to visit St.

<sup>1</sup> Isaac Taylor, *Transmission of Ancient Books*, p. 28.

Albans and says that Richard went there, although Paris says he did not. Errors and contradictions in statement together with blunders of the copyist show that this was not an abridgment by Matthew Paris himself, and the writing of the earliest manuscripts is pronounced to be the distinctive St. Albans hand. Various compilers have been suggested, but the editor eliminates all of these by showing that one of them could have been but nine years old at the time this part closed; another was simply the indexer of one manuscript; two others were copyists identified with the manuscripts of other monasteries; and another, a Robert of Reading, actually had a hand in the work, but only for the period 1307-1325, not the whole chronicle. The later divisions were compiled at Westminster, and, with the exception of Robert's, were anonymous, so that the question of authorship is as yet unsolved. Since the first part is so much like Matthew Paris it is not of much consequence who the compiler was, but the method of proof, although reaching no constructive results, is extremely suggestive.<sup>1</sup>

Itinerary of  
Richard I.

The Itinerary of Richard I (1187-99) was formerly supposed to have been written by Geoffrey Vinsauf. Comparison with other literature of the period shows that the work is a prose translation into Latin of a French poem. This was "*L'histoire de la guerre sainte*," by one Ambrose, who appears to have been a jongleur of Evreux and who took part in the third crusade, where Richard I was so

<sup>1</sup> See Preface to the *Flores Historiarum*, edited by H. R. Luard (Rolls Series).



conspicuous. The translation is not bound hard and fast to the original, consequently it is of interest and importance to know the writer. Here the investigator meets with the accumulated errors of past generations. Geoffrey was in fact a contemporary writer who composed a poem on Richard I, but the references of later writers, the productions of the same period and other indications show that the work comes from Richard, canon and prior of Holy Trinity, London.

The date of publication is shown by internal evidence. In the first place, the time was evidently after the death of Richard, for all the manuscripts mention John as "tunc comite." The writer, referring to an episode in which King John was concerned, speaks of it in time past, that monarch "then being count." John began to reign in 1199, the terminus post quem. The other limit is established by the fact that Giraldus Cambrensis, in his *De Instructione Principum*, made large extracts from the *Itinerary*. From other sources it is known that Giraldus could not well have lived beyond the year 1220. Therefore we have the terminus ante quem, and the result that the book must have appeared between the years 1199 and 1220.<sup>1</sup>

The "Eikon Basilike" was the famous document which was alleged to have been written by Charles I of England and at his death left to his subjects as a moral and political testament. The opinions

The Eikon  
Basilike.

<sup>1</sup> *Chronicles and Memorials of the Reign of Richard I.*, Vol. I. Introduction by Wm. Stubbs, pp. 69-70. Also in *Historical Introductions to the Rolls Series* by W. Stubbs, pp. 310-365.

expressed in it were so suitable to the hour and to a king awaiting death that belief in his authorship continued for some time. In the following reign one Dr. John Gauden claimed to be the author. This might have been for the purpose of gaining royal favor at the hands of Charles II, hence proof should be required for such an important allegation. The matter has been often discussed, but a recent writer has forcibly summed up the arguments for ascribing the authorship to Gauden. In brief, the reasons for belief are these:

1. Similarities of style found in other works by Gauden. This is shown particularly in alliterations, of which there are hundreds of cases in the Eikon.
2. Plays upon words, puns. These are characteristics of Gauden, but not of the king.
3. The vocabulary of the Eikon is very noteworthy. There are about 300 striking words of which very few are used in other writings of the king, but many are found in Gauden. The instances are so numerous as to be convincing.
4. There are many expressions characteristic of Gauden, such as "man of their man;" "blessing of blessings temporal;" "soul of our souls;" etc. There is also characteristic rhythmic construction in many instances.
5. The biblical quotations are those customary to Gauden. Virgil is his favorite classical author, with whom Charles was not known to be familiar. There are other classical allusions which do not seem characteristic of the king.
6. Comparison with the "Vindication of King Charles" by Edward Simmons shows indebtedness to that book. The

"Vindication" was published in 1648 and is thought to have had Gauden's cooperation. The Eikon claims to have been written many years before. 7. There are historical errors in the Eikon which would be improbable in a work of the king, and are sufficient of themselves to cast doubt upon the authorship. 8. The Eikon is verbose in style. This was not a fault of Charles. 9. The style of printing, the title pages and emblems used are such as would connect the other works of Gauden with this.<sup>1</sup> These arguments illustrate several principles of criticism, to which attention has already been called, both as to external facts and as to content.

Under any circumstances it is of interest and frequently important to know from what place a document or chronicle originated, but this is especially the case when the other factors, time or author, cannot be determined. The object in finding the author is to find the person responsible for the statements in the work. In the absence of that information it may be important to know the place of derivation, for from this we may judge of the proximity of the anonymous writer to the events, the atmosphere in which the work was created, perhaps the political or social bias naturally to be expected. The place where a manuscript was found, or where a book was printed, gives very little basis for the final determination of doubtful cases. Books in all ages, whether in manuscript or type, have travelled far. In times of

<sup>1</sup> C. E. Doble in the Academy, London, May 12, 26; June 9, 30, 1883. Gardiner, History of the Civil War, IV, 325. Dictionary of National Biography, "John Gauden."

persecution men often had their works printed abroad or gave a false address for protection. Much Puritan literature was published in Geneva and Holland, and much home printing was dated in other countries to prevent detection.

**Evidence of  
Language.**

Letters and documents might naturally be supposed to show the language or dialect of their peculiar region, but no final determination can come from these alone. Men may carry their language into foreign parts, or they may write in a dialect to suit the reader, not the writer. In ancient times we are told, the copyists prepared manuscripts of the Greek authors in the dialects of various cities and islands. In searching for the place of origin all outside phenomena of chirography, materials, or language may offer suggestions, but all must be used with caution. The contents, on the other hand, may reveal what the author hoped to conceal. The peculiar knowledge of locality shown by the document, the incidental references to persons or to the expected readers, may give hints as to the environment of the writer.

## CHAPTER X

### INTERDEPENDENCE OF SOURCES

THE examples of determination already given show the importance of consulting the predecessors of an author or document. This is particularly true in the study of mediæval documents, for at that time the conception of literary property did not exist, nor did the writer scrutinize closely the statements of his predecessors. Whatever had once been written down was usually accepted as good, and criticism was but feebly exercised in any field of literature. We may not stop here to find the cause of that uncritical attitude which was so marked in the period called the "age of authority." This will be discussed later on in the interpretation of historical evidence. As a matter of fact, the literary sins of the past come to the help of the investigator, and for the purposes of external criticism and identification of materials this habit of appropriation is of great service to the student of the mediæval period. Authors borrowed literally with great freedom, and embodied fragments of other writers, or whole books, in their own works. As shown by previous examples, we are enabled by a study of quotations to approach the time, place, and authorship of doubtful writings. But in the midst of all of this evidence of borrowing let it not be forgotten that, after all, the principal object of

## SEARCH

me one of plagiarism, of a statement, the given narration. The witness nearest to the event is not to report.

It is not to exist that a classification of them were altogether unlike that of the so-called 'r', where the first part is from Matthew Paris.<sup>1</sup> Examples of which quotations are found in even more sources, and the remoteness of the last is not to be denied. These cases in themselves create a difficulty to the investigation of the literature of the time, and one or many authors have given them in the form of a list. Each citation is to be traced to a previous author, and any attempt to demonstrate from point to point by the use of the text for identification. A

few examples will suggest a new problem.

In a series of six early volumes from the period of the Saxon Chronicle, the words

Huntingdon, and Simeon of Durham show interesting relations.<sup>1</sup> Recording the journey of Alfred to Rome in 853, the Saxon chronicler is very succinct.

"And the same year King Aethelwulf sent his son Aelfred to Rome. Leo was then pope of Rome, and he consecrated him king, and took him for his son at confirmation."

Asser the contemporary and biographer of Alfred expands a little, yet in reality adds nothing, unless it be an "honorable escort," but even this was a matter which might necessarily be expected on the journey of the prince.

"In the same year, King Aethelwulf sent his son Aelfred, above-named, to Rome, with an honorable escort both of nobles and commoners. Pope Leo (the fourth) at that time presided over the apostolic see, who ordained and anointed for king the aforesaid child Aelfred, and confirmed him, receiving him as his son of adoption."

Ethelwerd, writing in the tenth century, enlarges a little upon the chronicle but in a perfectly obvious way which he himself explains.

"In the same year king Aetheluulf sent his son Aelfred to Rome in the days of our Lord pope Leo, who consecrated him king and named him his son in baptism, as we are accustomed to name little children, when we receive them from the bishop's hand."

<sup>1</sup> For purposes of convenient comparison see the compilation called the Works of Alfred, by J. A. Giles, p. 2, pg. 16. The passages may also be found in translation in Giles, Six Old English Chronicles, and the originals in the authentic texts of the Rolls Series.

Florence of Worcester (d. 1118) apparently followed Asser in the presentation of thought.

"In the same year, king Aetheluulf sent his son Aelfred, above-named, to Rome, with an honourable escort both of nobles and commoners. Whom pope Leo, at his father's request, ordained and annointed for King, and confirmed, receiving him as his son of adoption."

Henry of Huntingdon (1084(?)-1155) returns to the brevity of the chronicle.

"In the same year king Adelwlf sent to Rome, to Pope Leo, his son Alured, whom Leo afterwards blessed as king, and received him as his son."

Simeon of Durham flourished about 1130. He says:

"In the same year king Ethelwlf sent over to Rome his son Elfred accompanied by a great band of noble soldiers. At which time the blessed pope Leo presided over the apostolic see: who ordained and anointed for king the aforesaid child, and receiving him for his adopted son, confirmed him and sent him back to his country and to his father with the blessing of St. Peter the apostle."

Simeon followed either Florence or Asser. His additional details are simply circumstances naturally connected with such an episode. As Alfred returned and lived to rule his kingdom for many years it was safe to say that the pope "sent him back to his country and to his father." A blessing followed every religious service and might well be expected in this important case. This is embellishment of the narrative, not with fiction, but with customary parts of a well-known ceremony.



In regard to the landing of the Danes in 851 the Saxon chronicle speaks with the greatest brevity. Danes in Eng-  
land.

"And the same year came three hundred and fifty ships to Thamesmouth, and the crews landed and broke into Canterbury and London, and put to flight Beorhtwulf king of the Mercians with his army."

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

"And then went south over the Thames into Surrey; and there king Aethelwulf and his son Aethelbald, with the army of the West-Saxons, fought against them at Aclea (Ockley), and there made the greatest slaughter among the heathen army that we have heard tell of unto the present day, and there got the victory."

Asser, the biographer of Alfred and a close contemporary of the events, adds little to the account of the landing, but expands with feeling upon the battle of Ockley. Asser.

"The same year also a great army of the pagans came with three hundred and fifty ships to the mouth of the river Thames, and sacked Dorubernia, which is the city of the Cantuarians [and also the city of London] which lies on the north bank of the river Thames, on the confines of Essex and Middlesex; but yet that city belongs in truth to Essex, and they put to flight Beorhtulf, king of Mercia, with all the army, which he had lead out to oppose them."

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

"After these things, the same army of pagans went into Surrey, which is a district situated on the south bank of the river Thames, and to the west of Kent. And Aethelwulf king of the Saxons, and his son Aethelbald, with all their army, fought a long time against them at a place called Ac-lea, i. e., the Oak-

Albans and says that Richard went there, although Paris says he did not. Errors and contradictions in statement together with blunders of the copyist show that this was not an abridgment by Matthew Paris himself, and the writing of the earliest manuscripts is pronounced to be the distinctive St. Albans hand. Various compilers have been suggested, but the editor eliminates all of these by showing that one of them could have been but nine years old at the time this part closed; another was simply the indexer of one manuscript; two others were copyists identified with the manuscripts of other monasteries; and another, a Robert of Reading, actually had a hand in the work, but only for the period 1307-1325, not the whole chronicle. The later divisions were compiled at Westminster, and, with the exception of Robert's, were anonymous, so that the question of authorship is as yet unsolved. Since the first part is so much like Matthew Paris it is not of much consequence who the compiler was, but the method of proof, although reaching no constructive results, is extremely suggestive.<sup>1</sup>

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"After these things, the same army of pagans went into Surrey, which is a district situated on the south bank of the river Thames, and to the west of Kent. And Aetheluulf, king of the West-Saxons, and his son Aethelbald, with all their army, fought a long time against them at a place called Ac-lea, *i. e.*, the Oak-plain, and there, after a fierce battle, which was fought with much bravery on both sides, the greater part of the pagan multitude was destroyed and cut to pieces, so that we never heard of their being so slaughtered, either before or since, in any country, in one day; and the Christians gained an honourable victory, and were triumphant over the place of death."

Henry of Huntingdon has found no new facts but Huntingdon. adds embellishments of his own. He endeavors to show the severity of the battle and to vivify his narration by descriptions, but these details would apply equally well to any hard-fought contest.

"Adelwlf, in the 16th year of his reign, and Edelbald his son having assembled all their forces, fought with a great army, which with 350 ships had put in at Thames-mouth and overpowered those illustrious cities, famous through so many years, namely London, and Canterbury, and defeated and put to flight Britwlf king of Mercia, with all his army, who never afterwards throve again;"

\* \* \* \* \*

"And entering Surrey, they met the royal squadrons at Achlea. There was fought, therefore, between those large armies so great and so severe a battle as no one before had ever heard to have been fought in England. You might then have seen warrior men fall on both sides like a crop of corn, and streams of blood roll with them the heads and limbs of the slain. But would it not be too great and wearying prolixity to describe each particular? God gave the

fortune of the battle to those who believed in him, and unutterable anguish to those who despised him. King Adelwlf then was the glorious victor."

Simeon of Durham.

Simeon of Durham extends the account with purely literary embellishment. The sources of his facts are clearly evident, although one cannot decide from this paragraph whether he borrowed from Florence or from Asser.

"In the same year a great army of pagans came with 350 ships into the mouth of the river Thames. Who laid waste Dorobernia, *i. e.*, the city of the Kentish men, and put to flight Berhtulf king of the Mercians with all his army, who had come to do battle against them."

\* \* \* \* \*

"After this the Danes became more bold, and all their army was drawn together in Surrey. Which the warlike Ethelwlf king of the Saxons hearing, both he and his son Ethelbald with him collected a large army in a place which is called Aclea, that is, in the field of the oak. And when the pride of the English nation shone with glancing arms, the English fought a very long time with the Danes; bravely striving against them, because they saw that their king fought fiercely, therefore they became braver than their enemies in war. And when they had manfully striven for a very long time, and both sides fought with much sharpness and spirit, the greatest part of the pagan throng was thoroughly cut off and slain, so that never in any land, in one day, before or after did so many fall. The Christians, however on that same day honourably gained the victory and were masters of the field of death, giving thanks to the Lord in hymns and confessions."

Complex Derivations.

Numerous complications may meet the investigator who is trying to find the source of an author's

information. The early compilers were not necessarily subtle in attempting to conceal their quotations, but owing to the simple fact that they appropriated anything wanted from the most convenient source it may be uncertain from whom it was obtained. For example, two writers may be indebted to the same predecessor in at least three different ways:

1. Roger the original may be drawn upon by Matthew and by William independently of each other.

2. Matthew may quote Roger direct and William afterward may take the same matter from Matthew.

3. The quotation may be in the reverse order of the last. William may first draw upon Roger and Matthew then follow William.

4. Matthew and William quoting from Roger may each be drawn upon by a separate group of followers, thus expanding into different families. The result is to complicate further the route of search back to the original source.

Many other combinations are not only possible but have actually been found. In case one or more of the documents is anonymous, or if the time or origin of any of them is obscure, the problem is at once rendered more difficult. But it is practically impossible to formulate a list of possibilities or general rules to meet every case. The investigator must resolve each difficulty as it appears.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bernheim has attempted to provide a list of possible forms of citation and to suggest rules by which relationship may be determined, but the exceptions are so numerous that the rules are of little value except as hypotheses for further inquiry.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH

UP to this point attention has been devoted chiefly to description of the various kinds of historical material and the processes by which the genuineness of these may be tested. Although historical inferences have been called into use they have been applied only to the external facts about the sources. It is obvious that this procedure must take place first in all good historical work. The document or relic must be shown to be genuine before we begin to take evidence from it, but external criticism does not attempt to determine the facts in the case, nor does the proof of the genuineness of a document prove that it tells the truth. The failure to observe that axiom wrought great havoc in mediæval history. The inclination to accept everything written, not only as genuine, but true because written, perpetuated the errors as well as the falsehoods of the past. There exists even yet the temptation to accept the words of predecessors without sufficiently weighing their value.

Valuation of  
Materials.

The logical processes by which an historical narrative is constructed from the genuine materials begin with the valuation of the separate parts. We inquire whether the source is of a kind from

which truth is to be derived, or how far it is capable of rendering evidence. A relic will furnish one kind of information, a chronicle another. Where the source is clearly an unconscious relic there is no difficulty in drawing inferences. The stone hammer and the Greek vase enable us at once to perceive the relative artistic instincts of the two periods from which they emanate, and, indeed, a large part of relic material permits us to enter at once upon the process of interpretation. The difficulties appear at the point where the document approaches the line of consciously transmitted information. A business contract between two private citizens may be purely a relic of the epoch; a contract between a citizen and a government may be intended to justify a political movement; while a contract between two governments may be a treaty which contains the history of an episode or a period. It is the first duty of internal criticism, therefore, to mark the distinctions between materials and to determine their relative value in evidence.

The first conclusion in regard to the two great divisions of sources is that relics alone are insufficient. The consciously transmitted narrative provides the connecting links in the story. We come therefore immediately to the fact that in the pursuit of historical truth we have to do with persons and their characteristics. Only in rare instances do historical writers report on events which they have actually seen or experienced. They are obliged to use the eyes of others. Witnesses are called in to give their impressions. In a long history there will

Relics alone  
insufficient.

✓

be many different personalities to testify to the parts they have played or witnessed. The documents are not the witnesses. They are simply the records of those persons who took part in the events. The records are the impressions of the man or group of men who witnessed the occurrence. In many instances there are no records by immediate participants, and we are obliged to get what truth we can from the impression made on the reporter by some one else. Thucydides wrote partly from observation, partly from what other observers told him, and partly from documents which others left behind. In the written materials of history, therefore, the personality of the author is a constant factor to be dealt with. In the natural sciences there is no such element to be taken into account. Every observer or experimenter can obtain genuine materials at first hand and is not obliged to consider the observations of others, yet, when the chemist is following the development of human knowledge concerning a given phenomenon he needs to follow the reports of others. When the physicist attempts to trace the story of the discovery and use of electricity he becomes a historian and must make use of the reports of others. The historian of human affairs cannot recreate his phenomena, but must study the impressions made by past events on others. History therefore is a reasoning science, and attempts to find out what made these impressions.

Natural  
Science.

Personality.

The chief factor in the problem is the human being. This being has a well understood constitution, but shows a wide variety of individual char-



acteristics. There are well-known powers and weaknesses, but no general rule will establish in advance the conditions of a given person on a given day. For every item of information given the question must be asked whether the writer was in position to know the facts and if he was willing to report them correctly. On questions of fact courts of law admit only the testimony of actual witnesses, and bring forward as many witnesses as possible. The demand for more than one reporter of an event is not to fortify our judgment by the presence of mere numbers of witnesses, but in order to see if the event made the same impression upon all as upon one. After weighing the character and situation of the various witnesses we reason out as nearly as possible the nature of the facts.

In the practical conduct of research the nearest obtainable information frequently comes from some one who was not present, but received it from others. Also in this case the personality of the reporter is important, for we must know whether he was in position to get reliable information and whether he had any mental or moral bias which would affect his report. First in importance is the testimony of the eye-witness, or participant, in the event reported. It may vary from the truth, but it is a personal account and we may reason from it at first hand. Therefore, the first matter in the order of procedure is to determine whether the author was in position to relate facts properly. It is necessary to find out how close he stood to the events and how well he was qualified to appreciate and state them correctly;

Situation in  
Life.

in short, how near he comes to being an eye-witness. The situation in life must be examined narrowly to find whether in the nature of things the author could relate the facts. A prime minister has a better view of the political maelstrom than the most energetic county member of parliament. The general of an army comprehends the combination of military events better than an officer leading a brigade, or better than a war correspondent to whom the orders and dispatches are unknown. All of these are superior to the untrained civilian who happens to witness a battle or follow a campaign. So also in his ability to obtain first-hand information the monk of the middle ages was affected by the situation of his cloister. The monastery of St. Albans, for example, was frequently visited by royalty and by persons in authority. The chronicler would, therefore, have opportunity from time to time to learn events from the very makers of history. The extremely local character of many monastic chronicles is doubtless due to the lack of information on great events, owing to remoteness from centers of activity. The recording clerk of a city may perhaps have participated in all the historical events of his community, and in any case his official position would give him also access to the documents; consequently, for both these reasons, the chronicle of Berne by Diebold Schilling, for example, is held in high esteem. The lines of inquiry to be followed in order to determine how closely to the facts the reporter was situated will differ in each case and cannot be covered by a general rule.

Having established the situation in life as completely as possible, the next inquiry is respecting the capacity of the writer to observe and comprehend the events under consideration. This means in particular the grade of education to which he has attained; whether he is a trained scholar in general and, more especially, whether he has been trained to observe the particular class of facts with which he deals. Answers to these queries will have been obtained in part by the determination of the situation in life, yet it does not necessarily follow that a man in high position is fitted for it by education. The previous training should not be taken for granted, but its extent and character determined. The capacity for observation of a trained scout in passing along a country road is very different from that of a common traveler. A geologist passing over the same route will observe phenomena very different from either. Where another might see only scattered boulders, the scientist will find the evidences of prehistoric glaciers. A student of social history like Edward Eggleston, passing through a certain part of Ireland, will note from the method of plowing that at some earlier period lands in that spot were held in common. The chronicler will be likely to report best on matters which he has been trained to observe, yet this training qualifies him for observation in general. Arthur Young rode through France just before the French Revolution in order to study the condition of agriculture, but his notes are also full of the weightiest observations on the political and social conditions. His remarks on society

Capacity for  
Observation.

and politics invite confidence because of the evident carefulness of his notes on agriculture, both in France and Great Britain.

**Intellectual  
Qualifications.**

✓ The intellectual qualifications thus due to the situation in life and previous training have their parallels in the moral qualities brought out by the same circumstances. It is not at this point a question of truth versus wilful prevarication, but there are effects due to life conditions which are for the most part unconscious to the writer. Conspicuous among these are the effects of nationality. When writing either about foreigners or fellow-citizens the author is apt to show in greater or less degree the sympathies, aspirations or antipathies of his own nation. He may not care to conceal these, but even with the most fair-minded it is difficult to get completely away from the native standpoint. So also the class or rank to which the author was born or elevated may influence his attitude on public questions, and consequently his statement of historical events.

**Social Class.**

When we know the social class we may draw certain general inferences as to the education and fitness of the writer, but more especially as to his natural sympathies. Froissart, for example, although his origin was humble, gained the rank of knighthood and became thoroughly imbued with chivalry and the sentiments of the aristocratic classes. He wrote distinctly with an upper-class audience in view. In describing the internal wars of his day he hardly found terms severe enough to describe the peasants who rose against the intolerable oppression and neglect of their superiors. Such flagrant cases

of prejudice are not so difficult to detect and to make allowances for as the more subtle influences of class feeling which appear in writers who may not antagonize other classes, but who in describing the actions of men of their own rank impress their accounts with the unconscious sympathies, aspirations, and ambitions of that class. One cannot assume that every man or document will in some way show evidence of national or class feeling, but so much of it appears in historical material that the investigator must make this a serious inquiry.

Throughout the middle ages the clergy as a whole **Party.** formed a privileged order whom the common people venerated and the higher classes either respected or envied. They stood apart in their own estimation and a strong bond of class feeling was a most natural result. There were, to be sure, rival orders of ecclesiastics, but coolness in one direction was balanced in the other by warmth of feeling for the particular sect or order of brotherhood. In modern history, research suffers from the presence of political parties which have sometimes separated men into classes almost as rigid as social rank. For a long period in English history the words "Tory" and "Whig" give a clearly defined distinction between classes, divided as much by instinct as by political theory. Mutual opinion of each other was equally inflexible and one may look for its expression in the historical materials of that period.

Relative poverty or wealth may affect the views of **Poverty and**  
a writer, not only upon the theoretical rights and **Wealth.**  
wrongs of society, but also upon the course and

motives of actual events. The evils of the French Revolution were most bitterly felt by the lower classes, but the attitude of the king and court are not most accurately described in the journals of Marat, or by the violent politicians of the Third Estate.

Religious  
Opinions.

Religious opinions have separated men into opposing classes with more distinctness and perhaps more bitterness than any other. This is readily understood, for if the things which affect the soul and its final destiny are the most important, a wrong view is extremely serious, and an opponent naturally would be a dangerous person. In our day we are more tolerant of divergent opinion, but in earlier history it was very difficult for a writer to speak calmly of a heretic. It was more than likely to happen that his motives would be misinterpreted and even his actions misstated. The attitude of ecclesiastical authorities was so rigid toward the unorthodox that the writer who misjudged and misquoted them was practically safe from criticism. Divergent theological views, even when within the accepted general belief, were only in a little less degree causes of misstatement. It seemed as if there must be something wrong, if not actually diabolical, about a man or a party whose philosophical conceptions did not agree with the writer. Mediæval and modern history both furnish mournful examples. The Jews were not only persecuted on account of their race and religion, but their actions were falsely reported. Among other things, the statement that they sacrificed Christian children at certain times in their worship persisted for cen-

turies upon no basis whatever. The literature of the first part of the sixteenth century is full of bitterness and gross misstatements on both sides of the Reformation movement.

These disturbing elements appear at other times in forms less gross and obvious. The writer may not be conscious of his own bias and not aware that religious opinion is warping his view of events. The investigator may be obliged to find out by indirect methods the character of his religious views in order to see if they are having any effect on his narrative. Religious opinions in the majority of cases are received either by education or by inheritance. Only in exceptional instances are beliefs obtained by independent thought. The student will, therefore, examine the environment of the writer to see if there are reasons of family, schooling, social connection or otherwise, which might influence his theological conceptions.

Apart from its relations to the opportunity of a writer to know the truth of the matter about which he reports, official position is an important subject for consideration. If there is no other way of finding out his ability, the qualifications necessary to hold such an office should be weighed. Men reach high places sometimes by favoritism, but for the most part some ability must be present to retain their positions. The special qualifications of a general, or a town clerk, or a secretary may be presumed at least in some measure; the duties of the office may show whether the writer could have known the facts and if he was expected to act truth-

fully. It is well also to inquire about his relations to superiors and inferiors, and as to the line of promotion which lies open to such an official, or what may be his personal ambitions. It sometimes happens that the flattery of superiors is the key to advancement. This may not be written openly in an historical account, but may appear in the construction of events in a light favorable to the appointing power. The crude forms of this trouble may be seen in every period of history. The obsequious letters of subordinates to men like Cardinal Wolsey or Thomas Cromwell are examples in point.

**Vindication  
not the Object.**

The object of all this inquiry into the personality and circumstances of an author is primarily neither to vindicate nor to vilify his character. The object is to find out the facts with which this person may have come in contact, and the investigator ought not to be led away either by sympathy or by distaste for the reporter. The determination of general intellectual character is at best only a presumption not a proof, of exactitude. It will not suffice to assume that even a man who is habitually careless or biased, will in every case state things untruthfully. The investigator runs some peril of getting fixed notions of characters with whom he comes much in contact and must beware lest his research become a brief in defense of persons, instead of a judicious opinion on facts.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay, on the contrary, displays a marked distaste for William Penn and in spite of facts depicts him as a persistent hypocrite and sycophant. Morse Stephens in his French Revolution omits no occasion to make sarcastic remarks on the character and actions of Lafayette.



The consideration of circumstances primarily concerns the unconscious influences at work upon an author's mind. The moral responsibility is another question. When the investigator seeks for causes of falsehood it is not because he wishes to prove that the author was irresistibly tempted and therefore excusable, but in order to show that the facts could not have been as stated because of the ulterior object plainly visible. The love of truth is not regulated by nationality, rank, education, or religious connection. In lying there has been no distinction of persons, and the temptation to deviate just a little from the truth has been fatal to specimens of all classes of mankind. Therefore, general moral character also is only a presumption, not a proof, of accuracy. Each statement must be judged upon its own merits as to whether the author could or would be exact.

Protestations of impartiality have no value, for these have been attached to the most impudent misrepresentations of fact. The most honest intentions of fairness are subject to the unconscious influences of circumstances. Consequently, a man's own estimate of his exactitude may not be correct. The treatment of avowed opponents may show the general character for fairness, for if the author not only recognizes their good points, but also admits facts which he knows to be disadvantageous to his own party, he gives evidence of some judicial qualities. Admissions, however, may be only bulwarks to fortify still other misstatements. The literature of the Reformation controversy does not give much assurance of the careful treatment of opponents.

Protestation of  
Impartiality.

The facts must be sought regardless of the reputations of writers.

In publishing a work in modern history in which live issues are possibly involved, or perhaps when characters who participated are still living, the young writer is sometimes tempted to insert a preface stating how impartial he has endeavored to be. Such forewords were better omitted, for they leave the impression that the author is on the defensive. It is better to assume without announcement that the only way to treat an historical subject is with fairness and a judicial mind.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE WRITER AND HIS TIMES

AN important factor in the ascertainment of Moral Atmos-  
truth is the effect on the writer of the general moral sphere.  
standards of his times. Aside from the peculiarities  
of nationality or class there are influences due to  
the moral atmosphere in which an author lives. If  
this is characterized by austerity and matter-of-  
fact views of conduct, the writer is likely to conform  
to the ideal, as may be seen in the books written by  
the New England Puritans. In the middle ages, on  
the contrary, there appears an incredible amount  
of careless statement and downright falsehood.  
Reasons for this have been sought by the historians  
of literature, and they find one cause in the low  
moral standard. If the literature is taken as evi-  
dence it would appear that treason and faithlessness  
were regarded in the tenth century as the highest  
forms of wisdom. To laugh at a person who had  
been deceived and betrayed was looked upon as the  
most exquisite form of pleasure, if the most natural  
conclusions are to be drawn from a study of the  
poetry and prose of that period.<sup>1</sup> Other investigators  
have reached a similar verdict, not only for the  
tenth century, but the same causes have been

<sup>1</sup> Scherer, *Geschichte d. deut. Literatur*, 64. *Gesch. der  
deut. Dichtung im XI, XII, Jahrh.*, 4.

extended also over the eleventh and twelfth centuries, where the type of literary character which is most admired is Reynard the Fox. His adventures and successful tricks are invariably praised in the literature of the period. In fact, the poem itself originates and develops during those centuries.

**Mediæval  
Standards.**

To explain the connection of these phenomena with the mediæval conception of truth and falsehood the writer of a painstaking modern inquiry has formulated a theory of causes. Whether one accepts the results in full or not, the study brings to view the elements which need to be carefully weighed in such a case, and for that reason the argument may be profitably recapitulated here.<sup>1</sup> The author believes that the facts indicate that this period looked upon lying, not as dishonorable, but as a sin easily forgiven, and in the popular view it depended upon circumstances whether falsehood ought even to be reprovèd.<sup>2</sup> The same sentiment was felt, though not in so strong a degree, toward perjury, or rather the breaking of an oath. The tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries believed that a solemn oath or promise was completely fulfilled when it was kept simply according to the letter, notwithstanding that the meaning or content of it was disregarded. For instance, it was a very solemn act to take oath upon a casket of relics, but if the relics had been surreptitiously taken out of the casket, the person so swearing was released from his oath. Treason

<sup>1</sup> G. Ellinger, *Das Verhältniss der öffentlichen Meinung zu Wahrheit und Lüge im X, XI, und XII Jahrhundert*, 8vo. Berlin, 1884.

<sup>2</sup> Ellinger, p. 62.

and deception were not considered as matters which every one must in all cases and under all circumstances keep far from himself. These were instrumentalities which might be used without dishonor on suitable occasions.

How shall we estimate these matters in getting a conception of the period? Truth and falsehood are to be found in all ages, but in estimating the amount to which they prevail we must see how they were regarded by the people. If it is found that in literature lying is spoken of with disdain or as a grievous transgression we have public sentiment in favor of truth. If the traitor is spoken of with disgust we have reason to think that treason to the state is not so common that it may be lightly forgiven. But, on the other hand, if poetry, ballads, history, and biography are filled with cases where trickery triumphs, and writers take occasion, directly or indirectly, to uphold, or praise, the trickster and oath-breaker, it is evident that the atmosphere is not favorable to truth. We shall find in this environment that history is likely to be perverted, that documents will be forged or falsified, and partisan views will be expressed with evident intent to deceive. We find many noble things in Greek literature, and we have, in general, a great admiration for Greek civilization, but we get occasionally very painful impressions of the moral stability of the Greeks, who seem to have at times very little fidelity to their native states. In the middle ages, again, we have a still more unpleasant state of things. It is from this period that the chief distortions of history come.

Evidence of  
Literature.

The monumental forgeries of historical and legal documents which emanate from these centuries are appalling. Indeed, it is astounding to find that persons of such eminence would commit such deeds, and again, that it was possible for such crude deceptions to be believed in any age.

**Moral Causes.** The argument in explanation of these conditions sets forth first<sup>1</sup> that the general belief that the end justified the means was a cause of much looseness of conscience in the matter of truth. The literature of the middle ages gives evidence of this. The general credulity of the age and the lack of a critical spirit afforded exceptional opportunities to persons inclined to deceive. We have noted in other connections how this age has been called the age of authority. People not only received their religious opinions from the rulers of the church, or from some one higher than they, but they were inclined to accept whatever was told them provided it was somewhere written down. Little inquiry was made into the assertions of lawyers or historians. Their statements and writings were copied without hesitation. We may find it difficult to explain why this was so but the credulity is unquestionably there. Under these circumstances the temptation was enormous to lie or, at least, to deceive in part. The very fact that there was little danger of detection would lead men to fabricate documents and statements in their writings. Plain forgeries went for centuries without being detected, as in the case of the Isidorean decretals.

<sup>1</sup> Ellinger, p. 88.

The scholastic sophisms of the time helped to befog the public conscience. The dialectic sparring of the middle ages went on without any regard to real facts. Starting out with a hypothetical case, the schoolmen would argue out what seemed to them realities, for if the first statement was granted there could be no answer to their logic. Men's thoughts for a large part moved in a realm of unreality. The terms nominalism and conceptualism are expressions which explain somewhat the intellectual atmosphere of the time. Conceptualism declared among other things that thought could never obtain the right expression of words. That is true, because language does not keep up with the imagination, but when applied to conduct the consequences of the doctrine to public morals might be serious. The conclusion from that definition was easy to reach. It was not necessary to speak the absolute truth, since no matter how hard one tried it would be impossible to be perfectly accurate. Scholasticism.

The struggle between church and state caused a confusion of ideas which brought about a divided loyalty. The citizen was told, on the one hand, that he must be obedient to the church and the pope, and if he were not he would receive the curses of religion. On the other hand, the empire demanded loyalty, and appealed to the instincts of patriotism. If the subject was disobedient to the empire he ran the risk of being outlawed. Left to himself he had to decide between two evils, and to choose one side was to make him a traitor to the other. But he was not left to himself. In the quarrels between pope and Church and State.

emperor, the church, as the highest authority binding men on earth, put kings under the interdict and released their subjects from their oaths of allegiance. This led, in the first place, to a weakening of the gravity of an oath and opened the door to treason, and that to a generation already prone to such things because it was justified at certain times in the eye of the church. Then there arose rival heads of the church who thundered anathemas at each other, who released their adherents from oaths taken to their opponents, and themselves set an example of hatred and deception. All these things tended to discount the value of truth and faithfulness. Moreover, this very lying was frequently indirectly recommended by the miracle stories of saints and others current in that period. If a man was a saint it would appear from the popular tales that he might say or do almost anything provided he was successful and was forgiven afterwards. The evils of falsehood appeared at their very worst in the second half of the eleventh century when all this trifling with truth and oaths was at its height.

Mediæval Con-  
ventionalities.

Another element in this atmosphere is the rigid rule of ceremonial and conventionality in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. There was the conventional modesty and humility of ecclesiastics when elected to office. There were also the conventionalities of court life and knightly manners. These things are useful and advantageous when the ideal of life and manners is high, but when it is the conventional thing to act deceitfully and to do anything wrong provided you are successful, no amount



of chivalry will gloss over the evil thereby wrought. There were also the conventionalities of literature, particularly of poetry. In the poetry of that time love affairs were always with married women, and it was looked upon as the duty of the full-fledged knight to fall in love with the wife of some one else, and the more risks he ran in getting stolen pleasures from these adventures, the more perfect knight did he become, and the more popular in the minds of the poets and of the chivalry of that period.

The evidence of literature as to manners and rules of life is not without limitations. Poetry is apt to follow models, and these models are different in every period and one age may imitate another long past. The mediæval poets may follow only such other writers as seemed to them the most interesting and piquant. In early French literature the ballads of a certain class always sing about flowers and the beauties of spring. One might think that those were forms of nature which appealed particularly to the poets of that period, but the reason is that their ballads were destined to be sung at spring festivals. So also in the poem of adventure the beloved lady was always married to another and the hoodwinked husband was always in the plot. These characters are found in the poems because the hearers always expected them. In other words, such minstrelsy was conventional, and conclusions as to the moral feelings or the moral sentiments of a given individual cannot be final when taken from the writings of the poets and romancers alone; yet the fact that such a conventional moral standard

Limitations of  
Literary Evi-  
dence.

was present in literature and was applauded by popularity is an indication of an unfavorable atmosphere for historical truth. A change in public sentiment in regard to verity and deception appears to have set in about the close of the twelfth century. The poems of this period begin to praise truth and to decry lying. A permanent change, however, does not seem to have been effected immediately, for we still occasionally hear of lying and deception.

Fictitious  
Speeches.

Literary ideals have affected history in still other ways in other ages. In the classical period it was customary, for one thing, to make the prominent characters utter speeches on important occasions, whereby they expressed their sentiments upon politics or the course of events. It was of course impossible to offer a stenographic report of an address by a Fabius or a Marius, and the speech was necessarily an invention of the author. It was at best an attempt to put in what was appropriate to the occasion, or what might have been said. Such additions were historical fiction rather than history, yet were apparently always expected. Writers of the Renaissance were greatly moved by their classic models, and in attempting to imitate the periods of Cicero or Suetonius or Livy the speeches of the historical characters followed with the rest. Even the great historians of the new Italian language like Machiavelli and Guacciadim must make their generals and statesmen talk. Other writers in their descriptions of persons or their conduct in critical situations often used the language

applied by some classic author to an entirely different case. Truth gained nothing in this process.

History in the seventeenth and part of the eighteenth century suffered because the authors of that day looked upon it as a branch of literature. The ideal was the perfection of form rather than exactitude in investigation. The consequence was an easy-going acceptance of earlier writers and more or less unconscious distortion of facts, in order to provide agreeable literature of the established standard. The nineteenth century went almost to the opposite extreme. The German schools of research started the historians in so vigorous pursuit of original facts that the manner of presentation was much neglected. The ideal of the age was the finding of the truth, and no man since that time has any hope of a hearing who does not prove his statements, or theories, at every step. It is evident, therefore, that the moral and literary standards of the period in which an author lived must be taken into consideration in estimating his value as a source of information.

History as  
Literature.

Consciously transmitted history is not confined to written documents. Chronologically speaking, the writer comes late, since the word of mouth for history was employed long before the book, but in common practice the investigator ordinarily looks to see whether the chronicle is confirmed by the tradition. We proceed then to oral report as the next important field of inquiry.

## CHAPTER XIII

### EVALUATION OF ORAL TRADITION

It was pointed out in an earlier chapter that an oral tradition, as soon as it is recorded, is liable thereafter to all the vicissitudes of a document and is subject to the rules of criticism for written history. Except for the most modern history, traditions must be studied both before and after their appearance in writing. Our inquiry at this point is how far an account which is known to have been circulated orally is valuable as a source of history.

Oral Tradition  
Possible.

It must not be assumed that oral tradition is an impossible means of transmission of truth. Although subject to distortion and error it is quite reasonable to expect that facts may be carried for a long time in the memory. Instances will occur to almost every reader where anecdotes in which implicit confidence may be placed in the general statements have come down orally from father to son for more than one generation. Writers on historical method have been collecting such data since the beginning. Cases in point from ancient history are cited by Sir George Lewis.<sup>1</sup> Thucydides says that Athenians reverted to the government of Peisistratos and his sons, which they knew by

<sup>1</sup> G. C. Lewis, *Methods of Observation and Reasoning in Politics*, I, 272.

tradition (VI, 53; VI, 60). This ancient despotism of the Peisistratidæ began in 560 and continued until their expulsion in 510. The affair of the Mercuries, in which the statues of that god were desecrated by the young bloods of Athens and which led to the public uprising mentioned by Thucydides, occurred in 415. Tradition appears, therefore, to have been transmitted over a century in this case. It is easy to see that the story might be brought thus far by very few persons. Two men living to the age of eighty may carry a tradition at least one hundred and thirty years, and three long lives might cover more than two centuries.

Certain things are likely to remain long in popular memory, particularly those known to the whole community or state. Great calamities like earthquakes and tornadoes make a deep impression. A conquered community does not easily forget its subjugation; great lawgivers are remembered, although tradition may exaggerate their work, as in the case of Alfred. Long periods of royal government are apt to be fixed in memory, for long reigns give opportunity for a single national policy to make itself felt for good or evil. Other subjects of tradition might be added to this list, if only to show that in primitive periods, and sometimes in modern history, facts may possibly be carried orally for a considerable time.

Favorable Elements.

Yet the dangers of the distortion of truth are so much greater in oral than in written tradition that the investigator must consider the peculiar method by which a myth is generated. A tradition can be

The Genesis of Myth.

said to be formed by the cooperation of two powers of the mind, memory and the imagination.<sup>1</sup> First, an event or the report of an event makes an impression on the imagination. The accuracy of this impression depends on how near in time the persons stood to the event. The report of this impression will, furthermore, depend considerably on the native imagination in the person or race giving the report. This will differ in primitive times from an age of criticism, and an oriental mind will be affected differently from a Scandinavian or other western race.

Second, this impression will for a considerable period be retained by the memory, but the memory is not an infallible faculty of the human organism and the impression in the course of time will fade. In the fading process the minor details will become dim first, while a nucleus of the main facts will remain clear. Tradition may occupy considerable time in getting to this point, and may possibly get on record before other modifications set in, as it was possibly in the cases cited from Thucydides.

Eventually the imagination gets tired of this bare sketch and proceeds as a third step to fill in the picture with details of its own invention. This process may not be confined to the oral period, for the inclination to embellish a narrative is strong in any uncritical atmosphere. The motives follow well-known impulses of human nature. The desire to make an interesting story is supported by the constant craving of hearers for a strong impression.

<sup>1</sup> Ewald, *History of Israel*, I, 14. (Original text.)

Whether to terrify, or to amuse, or to explain, the curiosity of the readers is met by the ambition of the story-teller to interest. A desire to understand obscure points in a worn tradition leads to the invention of explanatory details which appear to suit the case, and the original story may appear at a later period in an entire new dress.

This process need not necessarily corrupt the main facts of the tradition, but may, on the other hand, establish them more distinctly, because the carrying down of a central theme with diversified details is an evidence of the vividness of the first impression. Examples are seen in the frequent duplications of the same story in primitive history. The two accounts of David's adventures in the cave of Adullam are clearly the result of the process.<sup>1</sup>

Buckle advanced the theory that history was injured by the introduction of the art of writing. Previously, man's story had been preserved in ballads and poetic forms in the memories of men whose occupation it was to render it carefully and accurately. They were held to this exactitude by professional pride and the memory became very powerful in the retention of facts. The introduction of writing, according to this theory, led to a relaxation of this training and to a mixture of the traditions. So long as each people maintained its separate corpus of mythology and anecdote, the traditions remained steadfast, but when they became able to read the traditions of other peoples their literatures became mixed. Anecdotes of one nation were ap-

Duplication.

Buckle's Theory.

<sup>1</sup> I Sam., 24.; I Sam., 26.

plied to the heroes of another, or many different myths were concentrated upon one character or event. When Christianity was introduced the history and mythology of heathendom became mixed with it. Saints were made to stand side by side with gods and heroes, adding more food to the credulous appetite of the middle ages. As examples of this mixture Buckle cites the belief of every European nation that it was descended from some hero of Troy. Paris was said to have been named from the son of Priam. Troyes was manifestly built by wandering Trojans, and other legends were of like character.

Many of Mr. Buckle's examples illustrate simply the ætiological or explanatory myth, which comes forward long after the event happened or the name came into use. His assumption of the accuracy of primitive tradition can be based only on analogy with modern primitive nations, which is a perilous support. Nevertheless, it is true that the mixture of tradition causes a serious trouble for the investigator. Persons, places, numbers, all are subject to confusion. Memory will assume a great load of facts and traditions but appears unable to hold them in true historical connection against the temptations to embellishment.<sup>1</sup>

Recapitulation.

A classification of the processes by which traditions grow has been attempted by certain writers. The recapitulation is serviceable in so far as it indicates lines of exploration.

1. Concentration. The deeds of a generation or more are compressed into a single period like the

<sup>1</sup> Bernheim, p. 494 (Ed. 1908).



Trojan War; all Hebrew legislation being laid upon Moses; or all the principal features of the English constitution being attributed to King Alfred.

2. Transference, from one person to another, or from one place to another. The virtues of foreign heroes may be attributed to native; the tendency to give a person of known characteristics more peculiarities of the same kind.

3. Embellishment, or the tendency to round out a story to completeness.

There are numerous accounts of past events which have been perhaps for centuries transmitted in writing, but which have been affected by the same psychological factors as the tales which have come down by oral tradition. This is likely to happen where the episode appeals to popular fancy, so that the account is likely to be frequently retold. An example in point is the story of the martyrdom of St. Ursula.

According to the legend, Ursula was born in Britain early in the third century and was the daughter of a certain king Deonotus. She became affianced to a heathen prince, but before settling down to married life she desired a three years' leave of absence in which to make a pilgrimage to Rome. She set out with ten companions, to each of whom were attached a thousand other maidens. Their ships were driven by storm into a Gallic port and Ursula determined to take a safer route by way of the Rhine. The company proceeded by water to Basel and thence overland to Rome, being there received by Pope Cyriacus. On the return journey

Legend of St.  
Ursula.

the pilgrims were attacked by the Huns and the whole eleven thousand were mercilessly slaughtered. The bones of these virgins are still to be seen in the church of St. Ursula at Cologne.

Origins of the  
Tale

The character of this narrative is made clear by a study of its own history.<sup>1</sup> The events are said to have occurred in the third century, but no mention of them can be found before the latter part of the ninth. There may have been an earlier tradition, since a "Church of the Sacred Virgins" is spoken of in the ninth century and a story of martyrdom was current during the same period, but the number of women was not fixed and the earlier names of the heroines were Martha and Saula. Ursula is first seen in a martyrology written probably about 890, where in the calendar of Saints for October 21 she heads a list of eleven virgins (XI. virg.). In the course of the tenth and eleventh centuries the numbers jump into the thousands. A charter of Cologne dated 922 mentions a monastery "of the eleven thousand virgins." In a chronicle written somewhat before 1112 the legend got its full expansion and the date of the event was placed at 453, as more suitable to an invasion of Huns.

Anachronisms.

The story bears the plain marks of legendary origin. The name of the father, *Deonotus*, "God knows-who," is an attempt to provide an unknown but necessary figure in the narrative. A pope was

<sup>1</sup> Rettberg, *Kirchengeschichte*, I, p. 112. Oskar Schade, *Die Saga von der heiligen Ursula*, 1854. Kessel, *St. Ursula und ihre Gesellschaft*, 1863. Defends the legend. T. A. Archer in *Encyc. Brit.* St. Ursula. S. Baring-Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, October p. 535. Mrs. T. F. Tout, *Hist. Essays*, Owens College, p. 17

also necessary, but none by the name of Cyriacus ever held the chair. Furthermore, in the third century pilgrimages of penance had not yet begun. As early as 1418 Gobelinus Persona pointed out this fact, as well as the anachronism of the Huns, who did not begin to move westward before the fourth and fifth centuries. But before the time of Gobelinus the expanded details of the story had begun to find apparent corroboration in archæological exploration. By the middle of the twelfth century bones began to be discovered at Cologne in the field which had already become known as the *Ager Ursulanus*. In fact, tablets giving the names of prominent maidens were also found, but, curiously enough, in the same place were bones that were distinctly of male and not female origin. Then a certain nun named Hermentrud saw in visions just how it was. These were the bones of holy men who accompanied the party on the return from Rome, or were the relics of sailors who manned the ships. In 1183 more remains of men were found and numerous bones of children, even so small as the unborn. More visions were now required and the pilgrim crowd was augmented with relatives, parents, fiancés, and young sisters of the virgins. Fragments of clothing and old shoes were explained by miraculous preservation.

The facts in the case are that at these two periods the extension of the city walls through an old graveyard brought to light this multitude of bones. The misplaced piety of that age led to the invented explanation of the relics and even to the manufacture

Deceptive  
Relics.

of tablets to corroborate the tale, yet to find the origin of this legend is a difficult task. To some it is the transposition of a Teutonic myth, and according to others it may be traced even further back to the worship of Isis, but when it is asked if there be a kernel of truth in it anywhere, the first item of its history alone is practically fatal. No one knew anything about this multitude of fourth-century martyrs till more than four hundred years after their alleged slaughter. The most that can be said is that possibly some one at an early date suffered martyrdom in this region, but this bare, unconnected fact has no particular significance.

The origin of this tale need not blind us to the sincere worship and beautiful Christian devotion which grew up around its heroine. Her charming and self-sacrificing innocence led not only to imitation in private life, but to the foundation of churches and monastic orders. Viewed as an imaginary ideal the story of St. Ursula is a greater tribute to religious history than were the barren facts of the first accounts.

Legend of the  
Year 1000.

A legend which had a life history of some four hundred years is the account often given of the state of the public mind about the year 1000. Historians even of a late date have been fond of relating how the fear of the end of the world affected the actions of men and stimulated religious fervor. The people were said to have been so assured of the coming of the millenium and the day of judgment that they gave away their property and prepared for the change by acts of penitence, or, on the other

hand, gave themselves up to enjoyment while the day of life lasted. The situation lent itself to dramatic description and the opportunity was used to the utmost. As a matter of fact, no contemporary account of this condition of things can be found. The first direct mention of the supposed terror occurs in the fifteenth century, and since that time the legend has had a history of literary embellishment.<sup>1</sup>

The same criticism applies to the familiar legend of William Tell. It was formerly believed that the liberation of Switzerland about 1291 was due to a revolt against oppressive bailiffs sent by the house of Austria, and that the tyrant at that particular time was Hermann Gessler. The chief patriotic hero was William Tell, who, because he would not salute the hat of Gessler, which was mounted on a pole, was compelled to shoot an apple from his son's head. He escaped from custody by leaping from a boat upon a rock and afterward shot Gessler from an ambush on the road. Later he formed with two friends a conspiracy which culminated in the league of the Forest Cantons.

Legend of  
William Tell.

In this case also we find no contemporary notice of these exciting events. In fact, no writer of the whole fourteenth century knows anything of a rising against bailiffs or of any other of these peculiar episodes. No authentic record of any family by the name of Tell has yet been found. Gessler is not mentioned by any, nor is there any evidence to

<sup>1</sup> See the critical history of this legend by G. L. Burr, in the American Historical Review Vol. VI.

show that Gessler's were in possession of any castle in Switzerland. Schloss Küssnacht, his alleged residence, belonged to the Küssnacht family till 1350. On the other hand, the apple-shooting episode as well as many of the other details of this story are found in the poetry and legends of other nations. One need not stop here to determine the origin and career of the various *Wandersage* involved, for the development of them in connection with the Swiss episode is clearly visible.

Late Origin.

In the records the tale appears very tardily. Tell's feats are first mentioned in Switzerland in ballads somewhere before 1474, but in these early versions there is no mention of Gessler, and no irritating hat or pole belonging to any bailiff appears. The cruelties of bailiffs are found first in Conrad Justinger's Bernese chronicle, in 1420, but no names or details are given. The combination of the Tell story and the atrocities of bailiffs appears in one connected tale for the first time in the White Book of Sarnen, a chronicle written somewhere between 1467 and 1476. Many writers now followed with other details and more or less confusion of chronology until the gaps were filled up and the modern form given to the story by Ægidius Tschudi in his *Chronicon Helveticum*. This was compiled in Tschudi's lifetime (1505-1572), but not published until 1734-1736.

It was thought at one time that a confirmation of the story had been found in the records of a church in Uri, but it appeared later that a patriotic pastor by the name of Megnet about 1675 to 1684

had changed all the names of the family of Nell to "Täll." There is, therefore, no record even of persons to whom this myth might attach itself. The popular poetical form of the legend is due to Schiller, while it was embalmed in history in the elegant prose of Johann von Müller, but both draw their materials from Tschudi. A demonstration of the late appearance of the tale and the visible growth of its particulars is sufficient to disprove its connection with Swiss history, but, furthermore, the real documents of the thirteenth century are not only unconscious of the Tell episode, but exhibit the formation of a confederation by a far different process.

The stories of St. Ursula and William Tell illustrate very clearly the constructive process of tradition-making when the matter appeals to popular sentiment. The expansion was not due to more recently discovered facts, but to the desire for more detail and more explanation. In the one case pious deception came in at intervals to stimulate devotion and served to accelerate the growth of details. In the other, patriotism and admiration of heroism called out deviations from the first anecdote. One might say that internal criticism had no part in this investigation, since the external facts about either tradition show no connection with an original episode. On that ground one should throw the whole matter overboard as containing nothing of historical value. That procedure, however, would deprive us of numerous significant conclusions. The fact that this world-legend was cur-

The uses of  
Tradition.

rent in Switzerland in the fourteenth century is of itself a matter of culture interest. The fact that the tale was believed for nearly four centuries by the Swiss people is of the most profound significance in their history. As a patriotic influence and an example of heroism and devotion, William Tell was just as powerful as if he had been true. In the eighteenth century a preacher who in an unguarded moment spoke of Tell as a Danish fable was nearly burned at the stake. In the face of a half century of modern criticism a book was written as late as 1895 to prove the truth of the legend. The future will determine whether Tell is to be as powerful as a parable as he was as a belief. In short, it must be said that even the forgeries, which are so repellant in the annals and documents, must be weighed in order to determine the time and extent of their influence. In many cases they confirmed the rights of property or guided public conduct for generations at a time.



## CHAPTER XIV

### PICTORIAL SOURCES OF HISTORY

PAINTING and sculpture serve as historical material, first, as evidence of the condition of art at the time of their production, and second, as records or reports of the events depicted. When the picture sets forth an historical episode there must be inquiry, as in the case of the chronicle, as to the personality of the artist, if he is discoverable, and as to whether he was in a position to be well informed. If the work is anonymous the date or period ought to be determined for the same reason. As compared with written matter the picture has limited scope for the reproduction of history. The artist can show but a single instant of time, a partial view of a single episode, while the writer can in a page bring before the imagination a moving series of pictures which give the current connection of events. At its best, therefore, as a means of conveying a continued story, the painting is only supplementary. It is far more serviceable in depicting customs, manners, and institutions.

The illustrated Anglo-Saxon Calendar gives valuable information about the agricultural processes, the sports, and the pastimes of that period. The ancient Greek vases are not only beautiful in form,

but constitute a lexicon of archæology respecting costumes, worship, the rites of marriage and of burial, as well as mythology in general. The drawings both confirm and supplement the written descriptions, but vases and ornaments must usually be classed with unconscious relics.

**The Bayeux  
Tapestry.**

One of the most elaborate attempts to depict a series of historical events is found in the Bayeux Tapestry. This is a strip of linen two hundred feet long and twenty inches wide, embroidered with fifty-eight scenes from the Norman conquest of England. This is clearly contemporary. The art is crude, but the information is valuable. The embroidered figures must be accepted as conventional, but the order of events, for example, is shown by the order of the scenes. The weapons and armor of the Normans and the English are distinguishable and the attitudes of the parties in victory or defeat give clearly a Norman account of the struggle. This is seen also in the choice of scenes, by which it is made to appear that Harold is punished for religious reasons, as a profane and sacrilegious traitor. On account of these characteristics the tapestry is a commentary on the chronicles of the period which historians like Freeman could not well neglect.

**Egyptian Pic-  
tures.**

Of the ancient world the Egyptians were perhaps the most profuse in picture-making. Not only their monuments and manuscripts were adorned with paintings and sculpture, but the written language itself was pictorial. In hieroglyphic writing pictures represent ideas and eventually words or syllables. These ideo-graphs are interesting exhibits

of the psychology of the people, for they show the forms in which ideas first presented themselves, as well as the natural field of imagination and the power of expression. Aside from the pictorial aspects of language, it will be found in the interpretation of ancient art that one must take account of numerous conventionalities, due partly to the nature of the materials, and partly to customary modes of expression. To depict properly a scene in low relief or in outline upon stone requires a somewhat advanced state of art, hence in Egyptian pictures there is a painful absence of perspective. To make up for this the important personages of the scene are usually made larger than the rest. When we see a long procession of various races of people bringing tribute to one of the Pharaohs we need not assume that the royal family was a race of giants, or that the tributaries were pigmies. This is clearly a conventional expression of their power and pretensions, rather than their physical measurements. Their pretensions are found also in the written inscriptions and in the subject of the picture, in which the prowess of the king in battle is frequently superhuman. Yet in this same procession of captives most interesting evidence is found in regard to the color and race-characteristics of the nations with whom the Egyptians came in contact. These paintings and an occasional piece of sculpture give, in fact, a clue to the uncertain race of the Egyptians themselves. They are depicted as lighter in color than their African neighbors and still differing in feature from the contemporary Asiatics.

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Absence of  
Historic Sense.

It would appear that ancient and mediæval artists were totally devoid of the historic sense, but, paradoxical as it may seem, we ought for this to be profoundly grateful. Being unable to depict a person or a scene in the proper costume or setting of the past, the artist is full of information about his own contemporaries. The Anglo-Saxon illustrators of the Bible imagine all their characters in Anglo-Saxon costume and surroundings. King David appears in the garb of an Alfred or an Edward. The women of the Bible are found sitting at table or elsewhere in the costume and attitudes of the English women of that day. Solomon will be perhaps a Merovingian, and the common people are always contemporaries of the artist. Even some of the best painters of the Renaissance were unable to project themselves into the past. Paul Veronese painted the marriage at Cana with the guests in the silks, jewels, and fashions of his own day. The color effect is so fine that one forgives the anachronism, even in an age that ought to have known better, and accepts the picture as a lively reflection of its own time. The drawings and miniatures of the mediæval manuscripts have at certain periods an intrinsic beauty which speaks volumes for the artistic appreciation of the time, while the contents of the picture are highly instructive in a way not contemplated by the artist.

Ecclesiastical  
Monuments.

The mediæval sepulchral monuments also furnish interesting collateral material. The marble crusaders and the graven brass tablets in the churches can be cited as portraits only in a most general way, but for the costume, the weapons, the funeral cus-

toms and other indications of popular conceptions these monuments are of great value. The same may be said of the painted windows of the churches. Here is a distinct product of the middle ages, not shared by antiquity. Window glass not only came into use in the mediæval period, but it was then adapted to the decorative and educational purposes of the church. Scenes from the Bible and church history for the most part were depicted in color for the edification of the worshipper. These resemble the miniatures of the manuscripts in their anachronisms of costume, but are equally valuable for contemporary life. Especially is this true when secular institutions, trade guilds, views of buildings, or even cities are included in the pictures.

Conscious attempts to represent the life of the day Engraving. occur in almost every generation of artists. We are much indebted to Jost Amman for a series of small but effective engravings of the trades and professions of the sixteenth century. The tools and operations of many of the simple trades have been about the same for ages; but it is interesting to know just what they were in a given period. We might learn from other sources that money was struck in many places and by simple processes, but a picture of the coiners of money seated in a small exchange shop laboriously striking the pieces one by one by hand with hammer and dies is an important contribution to clearness of understanding.

Merian's pictures of cities in the seventeenth century are valuable explanations of conditions at the time. The perspective may not be absolutely

accurate, but the chief architectural features, the nature of the walls and defenses, and other interesting points may be established. An important subject of study, for example, is the relative amount of open space inside these walled towns. For this the pictures might be used more than they have been hitherto, to show the changes at different dates. The problems of municipal government in a given place, therefore, may receive much light from a study of the contemporary pictures as well as of the documents.

Trajan's Col-  
umn.

An important historical document in the form of sculpture is the column of Trajan which was built by that emperor in Rome to celebrate his conquest of the Dacians. This is a monument 135 feet high surrounded by a spiral band of sculpture, varying from two feet to three and one-half feet in width and extending from the base nearly to the top. These sculptures represent scenes from the Dacian war and form a continuous panorama of the most important events. It is a mine of information about weapons, costume, military engines, bridge-building, racial characteristics of the forces, and many other matters of culture interest, all displayed in one hundred and nineteen panels of bas-relief. The object of the monument is, of course, to present the notable events of the Dacian campaign and to emphasize the personal achievements and characteristics of the emperor who built it. The next generation looked back upon Trajan as a typical military hero, great in warfare and magnanimous in council, but there is almost no written history of his important reign. From Pliny there remain a number

of letters relating to affairs in the province of Bithynia and also a panegyric delivered in the year 100 A. D. The latter work is chiefly eulogistic of Trajan's personal character. The great Augustan imperial history does not begin until the time of Hadrian, the next emperor, while the part of Cassius Dio's history which covers the period of Trajan has been lost, except for an abridgment by Xiphili-  
nus. Trajan's own commentaries on this war, except for a few fragments, have also been lost, consequently these sculptures are of the first importance in establishing the order of the military events and, in general, the current of the story.

Portraits of historical characters raise a question Portraits.  
of art theory as well as of their value in research. Much of this form of representation is purely conventional or imaginary. On the other hand, in periods of fine art, both ancient and modern, there have appeared portraits which seem to be true to life. Both in sculpture and in color many examples show marked individuality, and the artist leaves the impression that we have a true view of the personality in question. When we consider, however, the great difference of opinion about the success of a portrait of one of our own friends; how one will call it perfect and another see no resemblance at all; it causes one to pause before accepting as correct the portrait of an unseen character. It is a fact that we must see with the eyes of another. The personality of the painter stands between us and the subject. The skill of the hand may, or may not, be able to reproduce the image formed by the eye, but,

assuming that it is of the best, there is to be said in favor of the artistic representation that a man's countenance is changeable, and that the picture may show one phase of expression strongly impressed upon one observer and perhaps not seen by another. It is sometimes said that a portrait is "idealized," not giving the habitual expression but an occasional or exalted emotion. Here, too, it might be said that a man is entitled to a record of his highest possibilities and that an artist may be admitted to the best that is in his subject. George Frederic Watts declined to paint anyone with whom he was not intimately acquainted, consequently he produced marvelous portraits of his contemporaries, most of whom were conspicuous in the history of the Victorian age. Not many artists have been so particular as to acquaintance, but the practised draughtsman may see things unnoticed by the casual observer or even by the intimate friend. Deductions from portraits as to the character of the subject can be only of the most general nature. Extreme types of vice or degeneracy may be clearly indicated, but physiognomy for the finer distinctions of character is an unsafe guide. The portrait, however, may assist in the comprehension of a written description. Every one pictures to himself the person about whom he is studying, and the painter may well be called upon to give the true features in place of the imaginary.

**Photography.**

Future historians of the nineteenth century will have the assistance of an art unknown before that time. Photography has already rendered immense



service in placing before scholars facsimile reproductions of rare and valuable documents. Used in connection with printing it has spread the knowledge of the past in marvelous fashion. So far as the contents of a document are concerned the photographic copy is as good as the original. The photographic portrait is as near accuracy as possible, provided the imperfections have not been unduly smoothed away by the retouching brush, a weakness for which is found alike in photographers and sitters. The landscape or building is likewise reproduced with great fidelity, yet it must be remembered that the lens at its best is not an absolutely perfect instrument. The perspective, or the impression of distance between objects, is not the same as that of the eye or of the measuring line. Objects in the foreground are apt to appear relatively larger than to the eye and the difference would change with the lens, consequently measurements based on an ordinary photographic view would be hazardous. To appreciate the value of the art every student of history should be familiar with the camera and should himself take photographic records of historic scenes. Having seen the view, the photograph then recalls the impression upon the eye and the observer learns to estimate the advantages and disadvantages of the process.

Maps may be classified among the pictorial Maps. sources of history, and are sought for as most valuable evidence, although such drawings show all degrees of accuracy from the rudest outline to the most elaborate details of topography. In maps

which come from earlier ages the interest lies not so much in the accuracy of the survey as it does in the fact that the chart shows the conception of the time as to the relative position of geographical points. The map of the world dating from about 1300 A. D. now preserved in the cathedral at Hertford, England, depicts the rivers and seas of the Mediterranean basin in most curiously distorted shapes. It is to be interpreted as a pilgrim's guide to Jerusalem and a monastic conception of the universe. The earlier map-makers often drew pictures of the characteristic animals upon the various countries, or the monsters of the deep said to inhabit different regions of the sea. Sometimes these are properly placed and sometimes absurd in form, but in every case the inferences are valuable to the historian for the contemporary conceptions.

**Early Maps of  
America.**

John Smith's first map of Virginia is surprisingly near the true survey, but the most interesting fact is that knowledge of the region had attained to such a point, for upon that geographical information civilization advanced and took further possession of the country. The history of the discovery of America must be traced not only in the written accounts of the early voyagers but in the drawings of the time. In many cases the diagram is clearer than the description, and under any circumstances one obtains a view of the data and geographical theory under which that particular voyage and its successors were made. When the data are wrong we can see good reason why subsequent adventures went astray. Even the guesses of early travellers

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may be enlightening to the historian, although illusory to the contemporaries of the map-maker. The history of the cartography of America has been repeated in the past century in the opening of Africa.

The legal and political as well as historical importance of maps was amply illustrated in the late contest between Great Britain and Venezuela over the boundary of British Guiana. The various national commissions employed experts to search the archives for records, and at the same time everything available in maps was brought forward to serve as evidence. If maps of travellers who had been on the ground could be found the testimony would have the primary value of eye-witnesses. Consequently each side scrutinized with great minuteness the drawings offered by the adversaries, and it developed that the Schomburgk map upon which the British claim chiefly rested was so carelessly drawn that its evidence had to be abandoned. The map must be tested for the personal equation of the author just as rigidly as in the case of the document. In the Venezuela episode the fallibility was clear, but the esteem in which that kind of testimony was held was shown by the care with which the material was weighed and examined.

**International  
Importance.**

The best historical paintings of today are more accurate than the earlier art. Archæology is a widespread department of learning, and the conscientious artists like Alma Tadema reproduce the scenery, costume, and faces of ancient Rome with astonishing beauty and fidelity. This fact is a tribute to the scholarship and truthfulness of the present age,

**Modern Art.**

but the works of the artists do not take the place of ancient art and evidence. These men are to be judged like writers of books about earlier history. They are successful in so far as they bring to mind an accurate view, but, however exact, their works must be analyzed as conscious attempts to reproduce that which was not experienced, and are not in the same class with the productions of a contemporary.

A great improvement in book illustration is to be seen today as compared with the pictures of earlier centuries, or even the last generation. Formerly the pages of histories were filled with fanciful pictures of battles or events as they were supposed to have happened. Crude restorations of ruins or of works of art were thought necessary to complete the impression. Now, the better works are illustrated by contemporary portraits, drawings, cuts of actual relics, coins, monuments, or maps, however rude they may have been. Where modern art is called in the scenes and incidents are given with much greater accuracy than formerly. This is a gratifying evidence of historical appreciation on the part of the general public.

It is evident that numerous elements must be taken into consideration while endeavoring to get hold of facts in consciously transmitted materials. The determination of authorship, the time and place of production, and the moral atmosphere in which the matter appeared are all factors in establishing the degree of reliability. Assuming that the document has been shown to be genuine, the investigator has to determine how far it is possible to get truth

out of it. Assuming again that the conditions are favorable for reliable information, or that the limitations have been properly measured, there remains yet the duty to draw the inferences which have not necessarily been formally written down. An analysis of this process will show that this consists essentially of two parts. There is first a weighing of the evidence offered by the author, and second, the consideration of the chronicle or history as a simple relic of its period. If this distinction is kept clearly in mind the valuation of conscious material will be more likely to be accurate.

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## CHAPTER XV

### CRITICISM AND INTERPRETATION OF RECORDS

It is possible to define and separate the various processes of the mind when engaged in historical research. We may mark the point where in theory the qualification of the source is adjudicated and where the judgment of truth begins, but in reality these actions occur simultaneously, or in such rapid succession that we arrive at a general conclusion along several lines at almost the same instant. It is for that reason, and to avoid repetition, that this book has brought together procedures which theoretically might be separated into internal criticism and interpretation.

Where the material crosses the line between consciously transmitted history and relics, that is to say, where it is conscious in part and unconscious in part, like a monument with an inscription, there is danger that the properties of each division will get confused in the search for truth. The study of this border material demands that the parts be strictly defined before judgment. Whether on a monument or on a parchment, the investigator should clearly determine in his own mind which part of the document is unconscious testimony. That part which evidently intends to convey an

historical record must be judged by the rules of conscious authorship. The foregoing brief study contains the elements of the method which must be applied alike to monuments and records, so far as they are dependent upon individuality, time, and place. The materials which may be classed with relics in the larger sense are subject to considerations which follow.

Documents which are distinctly relics of their epoch may for sake of convenience be grouped in two large classes, public and private. Even under such a broad classification there will be found much crossing of lines. In one sense all are relics, like the arrowhead or the coin, but, on the other hand, the source of the document has much to do with its valuation. For the sake of clearness it seems best to treat of the written relic quite apart from the handiwork of man, because the conscious part is so likely to spring out of the record at any moment; yet the method which should apply to the relic must be closely followed, and the applications of the principles to certain classes of material are now in order, first in respect to public documents. Public Documents.

Since history concerns itself so much with governments and public affairs it naturally follows that official documents occupy a large place in the labors of the historical student. In fact, no class of material is more abundant than this, since it includes the transactions of every sort of public authority, from parliament to town meeting, or from kings to constables, and the more modern the period the greater the amount. To give a list of these sources alone

would require a volume, and to give an analysis of every kind of available public document would far exceed the scope of this work; yet a brief characterization of various classes of this material will serve in a measure to point out the relative value of each, and for that purpose the division of the powers of government into legislative, executive, and judicial will afford a convenient order of consideration.

Legislative  
Records.

For purposes of interpretation, legislative records fall into two classes, first, the statutes enacted, and, second, the records of discussion and information which preceded. In the one class are found the United States Statutes, and in the other the Congressional Record; the Statutes of the Realm supplemented by the Journals of the House of Commons; or the session laws of a state legislature compared with its journals. The law enacted, or the international treaty agreed upon, is not necessarily the embodiment of pure justice or the ideal solution of the problem. It is rather the result at that time obtainable through a compromise among divergent opinions and interests. It is a relic of the prevailing conditions of the politics and society of its day.

The process by which this compromised result was attained is found in the minutes of proceedings, and in this record the investigator also expects to find the motives under which the law-makers acted. He will probably find there the alleged motive at least, but this is by no means uniformly certain, since records of parliamentary debates vary greatly in completeness. It may be necessary to search



outside of these documents to find the true motives behind the transaction, for it is safe to assume that a law or a resolution of a public body was not made for the sole benefit of future historians. These actions were taken to establish a legal relation, or to bring about an immediate condition. To avoid disputes an exact copy of the act was recorded and printed, or placed where it might be consulted. The record of proceedings is intended to show that the law was passed by the proper number of votes, or according to established rules, and secondarily to give the reasons for its adoption. It cannot be said that the future is left entirely out of consideration, for legislators usually are looking for justification more or less remote. It may be at the hands of their party at the next election, or it may be in the esteem of posterity, but the minutes of discussion will be likely to show the reasons which the enactors wished to be considered their motives. If these were in reality base or venial, the fact is not likely to appear in the official record.

Sometimes the reasons for an act are given in the title or preamble of the document itself. In that case it is necessary to make a clear distinction between the two parts. The act is the relic of the time, the unconscious testimony of the period, while the preamble is the consciously transmitted account to be judged by conditions of personality. Thus the law of Henry VIII for the abolition of monasteries, 1536, begins with an elaborate preamble, as follows: The Preamble.

“Forasmuch as manifested sin, vicious, carnal and abominable living is daily used and committed among

the little and small Abbeyes, Priories and other religious houses of Monks, Canons and Nuns where the congregation of such religious persons is under the number of twelve persons, whereby the governors of such religious houses and their convent spoil destroy consume and utterly waste, as well as their churches, monasteries priories principal houses, farm granges, lands tenements and hereditaments, as the ornaments of their churches their goods and cattle, to the high displeasure of Almighty God and to the great infamy of the Kings Highness and the Realm if redress should not be had thereof; and albeit that many continual visitations hath been heretofore had the space of two hundred years and more, for an honest and charitable reformation of such unthrifty carnal and abominable living, yet nevertheless little or none amendment is hitherto had, but their vicious living shamelessly increaseth and augmenteth," etc.<sup>1</sup>

This was the justification put forward by the law-makers in advance of their drastic procedure. Mr Froude was satisfied with such testimony to the superior motives of Henry VIII in destroying religious foundations, but most investigators will require other evidence of the truth of the allegation put forward. Indeed, the weight of testimony is much against the disinterestedness of that sovereign in the whole transaction. No historian of the present generation would be guilty of the avowal that he believed these allegations because they were to be found in the Statutes of the Realm. The habit of classifying materials and of distinguishing between the various parts of such a document will go far to prevent errors of judgment upon facts.

<sup>1</sup> Statutes of the Realm, 27 Hen. VIII, c. 28.

Laws are among the most precious relics of the past, for they indicate the framework of society, the various conceptions of justice, and the ideals toward which men were striving. In earlier periods of history it is easier to note the unconscious relation of law to society, for obedience to law was obedience to custom. Even when men thought that law was the concrete voice of deity it is clear that they accepted the laws because their fathers had obeyed them. The Decalogue when reaffirmed on Mt. Sinai had undoubtedly been the ideal of the Semitic peoples for generations before. The law of the Twelve Tables was a written affirmation of earlier Latin customs, and the great codes of Roman Law grew up slowly out of the habits and practices of that people. Such also were the Germanic codes of the early middle ages. These laws were not made by any legislative body, nor at the dictation of a monarch. They embodied the peculiar and long-standing customs of that race. Alfred the Great is called a great law-giver, but he said of himself that he was only a collector. He would not have dared to change the ancient law, but took the best in the codes of his predecessors. The great collections of the *Coutumes de France* are witnesses to the long continuance of provincial custom in that country. For many ages the source of law appears to be apart from the living generation, receiving obedience because it came down from the past. So long as this feeling persisted change in civilization was slow. The transformation of law from divine decrees to the decrees of parliaments is a subject of great interest

in itself, but for the historical investigator the inference is plain that the law which can be unmade by man reflects in a far different way from the accepted divine law the age of its production. The citizen of the later time has, or should have, a greater conscious responsibility for the conditions of his generation, not only in the obedience to law but in its formation and progress. The laws are his product rather than the decrees of gods, of custom, or of despots, and the historian finds in them new avenues of inquiry after causes and conditions.

Law and Reality.

That the law on the statute-book is one thing and obedience another, need hardly be said. We are sometimes deceived into believing that a series of good laws means a well-ordered state, but nothing must be taken for granted, either for better or for worse. It is not a question of occasional lapses into crime, for we can see every day that law does not prevent all thievery or all manslaughter, but it is often necessary to inquire whether a law receives any support at all in public opinion. Sometimes a statute remains on the book a long time after it has ceased to be observed. An occasional appeal to it shows how far from public custom its provisions have become. It is still forbidden in Maryland to utter profanity in public places, but no one but the most boisterous rowdy is ever prosecuted for such a misdemeanor. Hence it is wise in all instances to search for actual conditions.

The establishment of the Truce of God in the eleventh century was an act for which the church cannot be too highly praised, but it would be too

much to expect that all fighting or private warfare ceased every week between Wednesday and Monday. The conditions of labor in the fourteenth century were much disturbed by the Black Death, and the landowning law-makers endeavored to bind the peasantry to particular localities. The incompleteness of this attempt is seen in the frequency with which the same law was reenacted by successive sovereigns. The labor laws of Elizabeth confess the ill success of previous experiments. So likewise with the sumptuary laws which appeared in all European countries in the later middle ages. It seemed to the statesmen of that period necessary to restrict the expenditures of private individuals for clothing, festivities, or gifts, and to regulate to some extent the fashions in dress. This was done with the best of motives, but a progressive study of the laws reveals a persistent and usually vain conflict with popular desires. In every case it behooves the historian to inquire how far the actual practice conformed to the ordinance.

The relation of crime to punishment is a fruitful field of inquiry when measuring the civilization of a given period. The value of a human life seems small when the stealing of a sheep was punished by death. At that time small crimes were punished by the chopping off of hands or even worse mutilations, but laws have steadily grown milder until punishment by death seems monstrous for any crime short of murder. The severity of other days does not appear to have lessened crime, for hundreds of executions for trivial reasons are

Criminal Law  
and Civiliza-  
tion.

recorded even in the period of Henry VIII. Innate brutality must account in part for the burnings, the quarterings, the exposure of heads on pikes, and other gruesome incidents with which the punishment of offenders was embellished. Rude ages exhibit these striking examples, but the study of the criminal law is equally suggestive in a period of milder manners and less vindictive punishments.

Primitive Con-  
stitutions. .

Modern nations are for the most part provided with written constitutions, if not in a single document, in laws which together show the framework of the state. In the early middle ages this was not the case, for it was assumed that everybody knew the form of government under which he lived, hence no one thought it necessary to give a description of it. Tacitus writes about the early Germans, but incompletely and at a time when their laws were still unwritten. In the sixth or seventh century, when the customs were written down in Latin, the constitution was still taken for granted and the laws were simply lists of crimes and punishments. We are able, however, to glean many facts from the early German codes concerning the organization of society. For example, in the penalties for murder we discover that there are distinct ranks and classes of people. Among the Salian Franks the fine or composition for the killing of an ordinary freeman was 200 solidi, while that for a count was 600. Attempts upon the life of a king were visited with still heavier fines and even royal servants were protected by heavier penalties than their ordinary equals in birth. The

half free and the slave are discoverable by the same kind of information, and thus a most important section of the social organization is made clear without conscious intention. Other facts in regard to the administration of justice are likewise laid bare by this process, though the picture is far from complete. The early laws, therefore, are fruitful sources of information through inferential evidence. The process is not always so simple as in the instances cited, but the inquiry gives exercise to the highest order of reasoning and to the trained historical imagination. The attempt to decide what must be inferred from a law or set of laws respecting the organization of society is one of the most useful practices in discipline in research, and need not be confined to any one field of history.

One caution may be in order here, as well as in connection with other portions of history where the details are incomplete. The distance between the present and times more remote makes the contrasts stand out sharply, and the mind rests with such interest on the striking peculiarities of the other age that one is tempted to take odd and exceptional matters for the regular and common. Men and women have had the same human nature throughout the world's history and the peculiarities of expression may possibly be no more significant than differences in costume. When novelists make their characters speak in obsolete words the people even of our own language are apt to seem foreigners, but one ought to penetrate beneath the expression to see if the ideas and conceptions of

Danger of the  
Exceptional.

that time are really different from this. To contemporaries these curious expressions were not odd, but probably commonplace. Under Henry VIII there was passed "An Act for the Edification of a Windmill." There was no humor in this, but simply an ordinary permission to erect an engine of that motive power. So the figurative expressions of the Puritan period are most striking and exalted, but we should endeavor to imagine how they appeared to the contemporaries who were accustomed to the daily use of a more or less biblical phraseology.

Records of  
Discussion.

The class of legislative documents which we have for convenience called the records of discussion include an enormous amount and a wide variety of papers. In order to be sure that one has found all the sources of information about any legislature the rules of procedure of that particular body must be thoroughly understood. In most parliamentary assemblies in the United States a motion is presented by a member upon the floor and referred to a committee. This committee takes testimony, or makes inquiry about the matter, and reports to the house, which, when it acts at all, usually follows the recommendations. What is said and done in the house becomes a part of the record, but the process by which the committee reached its conclusions is not necessarily put into writing. The testimony, information, or data may have been in part oral and unrecorded, or, on the other hand, the whole evidence may be ordered to be printed. Rules of order may prescribe that the records of



committees shall be kept, and again they may not. The investigator must find out in each particular case what has been recorded, a task which is not always rewarded. On many great questions the reasons for things and the attitude of political parties may be seen in the debates, but there is also a multitude of matters upon which legislatures have little or no time for discussion, and for these the records of committees must be sought. Notable examples will at once come to mind where parliamentary commissions have made exhaustive inquiry into labor questions and other public matters which have extended into many volumes. It is the existence of these which may blind the student to the minor reports and to the absence of others. The only way to find out how laws and resolutions actually came to pass, and upon what information they were based, is to study in each particular country the practical everyday methods of parliamentary procedure.

This mass of reports is in itself a mine of information about the state of the country. Economic conditions, social progress or decline, the details of the great and the small questions of the hour may be found there. The testimony, however, must be tested by all the rules of evidence. The approval of a committee is not a guaranty of accuracy; it is at most a presumption in favor of the truth of a report. The investigator cannot shift his responsibility to a committee, but must be convinced by analysis of the facts presented and by the character of the witnesses. Naturally, the sources for this

Value of  
Reports.

kind of investigation are found chiefly in later modern history, and apparently the future will have more of them than ever. The beginnings of parliamentary life are but feebly reported. For a long time proceedings were regarded as state secrets and the laws were made known only when completed. Even when legislative activity became abundant and began to assume its modern aspects the necessity of elaborate records was not felt at once. Nevertheless the admonition is always in place to examine closely the methods of procedure at any period, in order to find any possible explanations, either in private letters or in public documents.

Genesis of a  
Law.

An important subject of study lies in the history of projects of law from their first proposal to their final enactment or abandonment. As a rule it takes a long time to bring about an important change. In ancient or mediæval history we are not able to follow many clues of this kind, owing to lack of that form of record. A few striking examples like the projects of the Gracchi or the reforms of Arnold of Brescia may be seen for a little in what may be called by courtesy their legislative history. One is more impressed with the persistence in those periods of the same legal ideas through centuries of time. In modern times when documents are abundant one may often trace the development of a law from its inception in the mind of some reformer to its presentation as a project or bill, and thence to its final enactment. Even after it has been proposed in due form before a legislative body it may be many years before it becomes a law. The

vicissitudes of bills, whether good or bad, and the methods by which the public and legislatures are finally convinced of their necessity, present an interesting section of investigation. The time consumed in getting a new law and the difficulties of the process form a commentary on the civilization of the period.

A document which constantly recurs in connection with law-making is the petition. This is an expression of a desire on the part of a group of people to have a grievance removed, a law changed, or a new project undertaken. Sometimes this is the formal method of the earlier centuries when all laws in England were preceded by a petition to the king to enact such a statute, indicating that the sovereign was the source of all law. Traces of this may yet be seen in parliamentary procedure. In the formation of a petition it is usual to state the condition of things at the time of the request, in order to point out the remedy. Notable examples are the *Cahiers de Doléances* put forward by the French people just before the Revolution. The burden of taxation, the oppressiveness of feudal duties, and the evils of administration in general are set forth in hundreds of petitions. The vast amount of this evidence gives it great weight even if it were not corroborated by other sources, yet the limitations ought not to be lost sight of. It was clear that there was a tremendous evil to be remedied, but in the statement of it we have in the *cahiers* of the Third Estate the evidence of but one party. Furthermore, the forms used in certain

departments were widely used as models in others, consequently in many cases the cahier cannot be regarded always as a spontaneous expression of the conditions in that particular district, either in respect to the oppressions or to the political ability of the petitioners, yet the value of the material as a whole is immense. In a similar way the history of religious freedom in Virginia can be studied in the vast body of petitions which have accumulated in the archives of that state.

It is natural to suppose that in a document intended for the eye of the public or of the public authorities great caution would be taken in the statement of the situation. The presumption is indeed a fair one, but we do not thereby eliminate all the failings of human nature, nor the personality of the composite author of a petition. The effect upon the investigator ought to be the same as that designed upon the law-makers of that date. It should set in motion a careful inquiry into the true situation with the petition as a base of operations.

Municipal  
Records.

By analogy the publications of municipalities may be examined with the same intent. It is only by courtesy that a modern city council can be called a legislature, though they are often constructed with two houses as if they required the checks and balances of a parliament. The duties of a council are in fact administrative, since their ordinances but carry out the functions prescribed in the general law, yet the procedure is so much like that of real parliamentary bodies that the documentary evidences are found in a similar classification.

For mediæval history the municipality assumes a greater relative importance. The actions of councils and town meetings are more truly legislative, for in many cases the cities were independent republics. In some instances the town is in a position to prescribe for its local wants alone, in others it may conduct diplomatic correspondence or even declare war. The town documents are therefore of very great significance in depicting the civilization of their time. In many instances there remain quite complete records of the acts of town councils, in which the scope of their action reveals the extent of their sovereignty. In the old records of Zurich,<sup>1</sup> for example, one finds curious transitions from serious to trivial matters. At one moment the council is fixing penalty for crime, at another the price of wine. One day they consider a treaty with a neighboring monarch and on another they decide whether a building encroaches upon the street. The mixture of powers would prevent a close classification of mediæval city documents, even if they were abundant, but from them as a whole there are to be gathered many interesting details of social life. We look first for the conception of government. How minute were the regulations for buying and selling; what were the sanitary conditions, the paving, the water supply; how far was it deemed necessary to regulate private conduct by sumptuary laws. Information on these points will be found sometimes in an ordinance, sometimes in the trial of a case; in a fine imposed, or a banishment declared.

<sup>1</sup> Stadtbücher von Zürich. Edited by H. Zeller-Werdmüller.

**Mediæval  
Ordinances.**

In an ordinance of the city of Basel, called the *Tax-Ordnung* of 1646, there is to be found a complete list of all commodities or services worth mentioning for sale in that town. It was not left to the seller to put a price on his wares but the city council performed this duty for him, as it does nowadays for public conveyances. One may know the cost in 1646 of the various kinds of cloth and the cost of making them into garments, the price of men's shoes and horseshoes, the wages of a carpenter or of a day laborer, in short, the value of every service down to the price of a shave.

The city of London was not a sovereign state, but under its charter could prescribe its own local ordinances. Its mediæval records are extremely interesting, and among these one of the most valuable compilations is the *Liber Albus*, dating from 1419. Although it was simply a compilation of the ordinances then in force and prepared for the use of the magistrates, it is now a mine of information about the social conditions of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Sometimes by direct statement, sometimes by inference, the life of London can be seen in this commonplace book of laws.<sup>1</sup>

**Modern Ordinances.**

For modern times municipal ordinances are equally the mirrors of social custom, but they are supplemented by so much other material that their value is not so unique. There will be found in them, however, many things which the ordinary descriptive writer of the period may not think necessary to mention, but which may be decidedly significant.

<sup>1</sup> *Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain. Liber Albus.* Edited by H. T. Riley. See editor's introduction for further suggestions concerning the life of the period.

## CHAPTER XVI

### JUDICIAL DOCUMENTS

JUDICIAL functions form in reality a branch of governmental administration, consequently the documents are to be interpreted as evidences of the execution of law rather than its creation. Judicial reports and records of cases show in the first place how the laws were interpreted at the time they were in force. They do not necessarily show the complete workings and social effect of a law, because a statute may remain in force a long time without conflict, or with few occasions for bringing the matter before the courts. It is only when broken, or when disputes arise under the law, that there is reason for judicial opinion to go on record.

It is the business of judge and jury to decide whether a public law has been transgressed or whether private rights have suffered injury. Whether a certain individual is guilty or not is of importance to the historian in a few cases only, but the facts brought out in the course of trials may be of great significance to the student of civilization. Even the details of judicial procedure are of interest to the general historian because it is important to know whether the system in vogue would permit the attainment of substantial justice. The contrast between the mediæval trial by ordeal, or by com-

Judicial Procedure.

purgators, and the modern trial by jury is clear, and needs no argument to prove the insufficiency of the former, but the systems and conditions of any period need careful inquiry to find out to what degree they serve the ends of law and equity. If the system permits of easy evasion by dishonest officials, conditions are to be judged differently from those where good regulations are boldly overridden. In ancient times the trial of a case called for complicated technical formalities which must be employed with infallible exactness, and the knowledge of which was confined to the priests or professional lawyers. The chances of equity depended almost on a lottery of words, and contrasted sharply with the practices of certain Swiss cantons in modern times, where advocates were prohibited and cases must be presented by the parties in person, or by their friends without pay.

History in  
Law Reports.

Not many centuries ago an English court could prevent a man on trial from having an attorney to defend him, and a jury could be imprisoned for giving a verdict contrary to the wishes of the judges. The earlier history of other countries will also show deficiencies of grave importance to society, but, assuming that the courts are up to the standard of their times in rendering substantial justice to all men, there are many things of interest in their proceedings. Questions of national importance frequently appear in the reports of the higher tribunals. The "State Trials," for example, contain among other things the great political cases in the history of England, such as the trials of John Hampden



and Charles I. These reports are in many of the earlier cases compiled from contemporary chronicles, others are official notes, but in either way their value is great. Matters also of great constitutional importance may be found in the court records of every country, the courts of the United States holding a unique position in that the constitutionality of a statute may come under review. It is this which makes the decisions of the Federal Supreme Court an indispensable part of the constitutional history of that country.

Besides these well-known facts there are to be found in law reports matters which are more likely to be overlooked. The testimony given as to economic and social conditions is often of the highest value. In civil cases the disputes over property and business transactions bring out the value and extent of commerce, as well as the cost of services and commodities. In a seaport town like Baltimore much light is thrown on foreign commerce through litigation over shipping. One is likely to find evidence of what is customary in the commercial life of the time. This kind of information has the value of sworn testimony which, though not infallible proof, has a serious presumption in its favor. The data involved have a still greater security in a case of appeal where the opponents agree upon a statement of facts in order to obtain a decision upon a point of law. The lowest courts do not take cognizance of great issues, but their functions are important in every society. That the justice of the peace in certain cantons of Switzerland is

Economic  
Data.

required to bring the parties to agreement if possible before trial is an item of great social interest. His very title, Friedensrichter, Juge de Paix, is literally carried out, whereas in most countries the meaning has been forgotten.

**Negative Estimate of Society.**

Court records, however, do not furnish a positive measurement of a society from a statistical point of view, since they take account chiefly of the fractures of the law, and pass over that great current of good and lawful deeds which go on unmentioned in the records of any state. Statistics of crimes punished are important in comparative studies of periods and peoples, for they indicate the growth or decline of public morality, but taken alone they afford an incomplete picture. Periods vary in the enforcement of the same laws, sometimes through laxity of corrupt prosecutors and judges, sometimes through laxity of public opinion. One must inquire which factors are at work.

**Mixed Records.**

Documents of a judicial character will frequently be found in records which are not consistently named. This is due to the mixture of functions which occurred in administrative bodies of the mediæval period and even in modern times. Municipal councils and executives often heard trials and decided controversies in law. The Privy Council of the Elizabethan period, for example, was both an administrative and a judicial body, hence its records contain matters pertaining to both functions. The true nature of the document must be continually borne in mind. The earlier records of the American colonies often contain in the same book

curious mixtures of governmental functions, because the town meetings passed upon all public questions from the admission of citizens to the probate of their wills.<sup>1</sup> Whatever may be the connection in which the judicial act has been recorded, it should be separated from its surroundings for interpretation. The possible inferences to be drawn from it have been indicated here only in part.

<sup>1</sup> For examples, see Early Records of the Town of Providence.

## CHAPTER XVII

### ADMINISTRATIVE DOCUMENTS

ADMINISTRATIVE documents form a class so vast in extent and so varied in character that a complete description here is out of the question. As time goes on and governments become more complex the number and variety increase. Governmental functions enlarge and submit to change, yet one characteristic of the records remains constant. They show how the positive force of the state is exerted. How extensive these are in theory at a given time is to be found in the constitutions and organic laws, but the actual practice is found in the administrative records of nation, district, town, or parish. We find here, first, the evidences of change from one period to another. The differences in the scope of government and variations in the carefulness of administration are indicated by a comparison of the documents as a whole during one epoch and another. We find that modern governments are doing more things than were the mediæval or ancient, because commerce, education, and society in general are all more complicated, and more problems arise which states can solve better than individuals. But it would be hazardous to assert that mediæval government was less intensive in all respects, for one finds on examination that

Government  
in Action.

the paternal care of the state was in some matters more pervasive than now. The regulations of prices; the sizes and weights of goods; the pattern of dress, and many other matters were regulated with an amount of detail which would now be called oppressive. The evidence for this is found in the ordinances of the period, reinforced by the proclamations, orders, and reports evolved in the execution of the laws. Generalizations upon the laws and conditions of a given time ought not to be made without due consideration of actual administration, both executive and judicial.

Among other things it is not necessary to inquire which class of official documents is the more important, for all have their place, and the importance will depend upon the line of research at the moment in hand. In modern times the larger affairs of state will be found in the records of cabinets and councils; the regular routine of administration will be recorded in the journals and reports of the various departments. From these a few examples of various periods will suggest the kinds of information to be derived from administrative documents.

At first thought one would hardly believe that a mere list of offices would be of much account to future inquirers, but, in fact, we are greatly indebted to some one under the Roman empire for a catalogue of the provinces, their subdivisions, and the designations of the governing officers. This so-called "Notitia Dignitatum" confirms other information about Roman provincial administration and presents a visual impression of the extent of

Notitia Dignitatum.

the empire and the minute ramifications of its government. It provides a key to the boundaries of various otherwise indefinite territories, and while it does not answer all the puzzles suggested in its text, there is light afforded on certain obscure movements in imperial history.

Domesday  
Book.

Another familiar example is the tax-collectors' manual and register of feudal obligations which William the Conqueror imposed upon his English subjects. The Domesday Book is in the first place a statistical survey of England from which we may infer the extent of its cultivation and form an estimate of its population. We catch some of the municipalities in their primitive condition; we find some counties well advanced and others too barren to be listed; the names of the people show the distribution of the various races and the extent to which the Norman invaders had taken possession of the soil; the terms used to describe the divisions of land in different parts of the kingdom open up dialects to the philologist and clues for institutions to the historian.

Pipe Rolls.

A Domesday Book, however, was required only at long intervals in the middle ages, but there are other documents which reveal financial and economic conditions from year to year in England. The Pipe Rolls, for example, give the semiannual returns of the sheriffs to the royal treasury, and are complete from the second year of Henry II onward. What might seem to be merely a collection of problems in addition and subtraction is a most valuable body of information concerning methods

of taxation, the administration of justice, the cost of public business, the forests, the sale of public offices, and a host of other matters which a chronicler might not think it worth while to mention.

There were from time to time so-called "Visita- Visitations. tions" of the counties. These were semi-official examinations of the titles of nobility and the feudal obligations, and incidentally furnish other items of information. Now and then there was a review of the property of the church like the celebrated "Valor Ecclesiasticus" in the time of Henry VIII. This was carried out under a royal writ by commissioners acting for the administrative power, and the chief purpose was to determine the taxes payable from these properties and dignitaries. The result is a conspectus of the English people on their religious side, and much more. The extent of the land owned by the church; the manner in which its income was derived; various forms of charity; the topography of the counties; the extent to which the population was provided with churches; the price of land; the value of various personal services; and many other kinds of information are found in a document not primarily intended for those purposes.

As an example of documents in common use in the administration of government take the sheriff's A Sheriff's Writ. writ as issued to the English counties during the later middle ages. Writs are instructions to the sheriff to take measures for collecting the taxes, or to summon the militia, or to see that delegates to parliament are chosen, and numerous other matters. There was in the time of Henry III, for example,

no statute defining the exact method of assessment and collection of the fifteenths or thirteenths, hence our source of information lies in the writs to the sheriffs, who in 1232 were told to have the assessment made by four elected men and the reeve in each township. This method differs from the plan used in 1225, and also from the method applied afterward in 1237. We can see that the details of tax collecting had been left to royal authority, and that various expedients were used, even when the form of the tax was the same. Furthermore, the history of the change must be sought in a series of these documents, just as the beginnings of the English parliament are to be found in the writs which tentatively direct that men from the counties be selected to advise the king as to how the taxes may be raised most effectively. The king himself had no statute to guide him in the method; simply the precedents of earlier writs used for similar purposes were applied to representation in an improved parliament. The writs which give us this information are not simply copies kept in a book of forms for the use of secretaries, but are actual documents sent to the sheriff of York, or the sheriff of Kent, and many others.<sup>1</sup>

Parliamentary  
Writs.

Inferences to be drawn from these simple instruments are numerous and many of them obvious. The extent of royal power is tested both by the expressions contained in the writ and by the variety of objects for which they are issued. The relations of classes are visualized when one observes that lords

<sup>1</sup> Stubbs, *Select Charters*, 355, 360, 365, 366, 375, etc.



and ecclesiastical dignitaries are invited by personal summons to parliament, while the ordinary members of the commons are invited in groups through an order to the sheriffs to hold an election. The existing relations between the monarch and the feudal baronage may be seen in the writs for the assembling of the army, and for the collection of the scutage tax which took the place of personal service. Similar kinds of information may be gathered from orders issued to royal officials other than sheriffs. The fact that the writ is an administrative act is the key to its interpretation, and the most effective way to get the historical value is to approach it first as if it were the only document of its kind in existence. What inferences would be drawn from it if a writ, or a series of them had been recently discovered in an unexplored repository? Assuming that attitude, one may afterward look about for further information and the value of the instrument will then be better appreciated.

Enough has been said about municipal documents to indicate the relation of the administrative instruments to the other portions of city records. In modern times the different classes have been fairly separated, but in earlier history the mixture of functions bestowed upon the same body of magistrates is reflected in the records. This in itself is testimony of the highest value, for in the absence of written constitutions, or detailed organic law, it is positive proof of the nature of municipal power, and even when constitutions or charters are present we are enabled to see the results. The charters

Municipal  
Orders.

which are found so abundantly in English history are the fundamental laws under which the municipalities are supposed to operate, but we are much better assured, not only of the interpretation of the charter, but even of the fact that it is operating and not obsolete, when we see the current records and the instruments with which business was conducted.

Financial Ac-  
counts.

The financial accounts of governing bodies, whether national, municipal or parochial, are important witnesses to the actual activities of the group in question. In modern times these are usually preceded by laws or ordinances which prescribe the objects and amounts which may be spent. In such cases there is more than one way of learning the extent and duration of powers. In earlier periods, however, the list of receipts and expenditures is often the only key to the actual local life. The productive property of the town corporations may be found perhaps in the receipts, and incidentally the feudal powers and privileges owned or enjoyed outside the walls. The extent of municipal trading in the purchase and storage of grain will appear in some cases, while between the lines one may read the consequences of these expenditures and in a measure reconstruct the civic life of the locality.

Parish  
Records.

Likewise in the records of that smaller unit, the parish, we may find evidence in the churchwardens' accounts, not elsewhere obtainable and more certain than it might have been in the hands of a conscious chronicler. The earlier parish records are simply of this financial character. The registers of births, marriages, and deaths begin in England

under Henry VIII, through an order of Thomas Cromwell in 1538, but not many of that date have survived. These are the gold mines of the genealogists, but the general historian may go back further for churchwardens' accounts and may get traces, for example, of the extent of church building before and after the Reformation. One can see many indications of the manner in which local life centered about the churches and parish houses. It may be found that the local powers of government are rather feeble; that in the time of Elizabeth these had been mostly absorbed by the justice of the peace, and supervised to the last degree by the Privy Council.<sup>1</sup> Because of the paucity of visible local activity one may be tempted to despise the parish record, but if the examination shows by elimination where the powers of local regulation have actually gone, it has established a fact of national importance in constitutional history.

Administrative documents are obviously relics of their time and contribute to history by indirect information. We might look askance at a Pipe-Roll account and wonder what guarantee there would be that the sheriff told the truth. He is interested in collecting all possible fees in order to obtain his share. The courts of justice at the time were openly used as a source of royal income. The sheriff may have added a bit here and there to his expense account when royalty visited the county, or the returns from certain sources may have been

Inferential  
Testimony.

<sup>1</sup> See Ware, Elizabethan Parish, Johns Hopkins Studies, XXVI.

slightly altered in his favor; yet in this case the historical student is less concerned with the balancing of figures than with the kinds of things the sheriff has to do. The accounting of the Exchequer was very thorough, and every sheriff carried home with him a notched tally stick which must compare exactly with another left in the treasury, so that in estimating the place and value of the Pipe Roll we must consider that there was at least an attempt to have things balance. What is more to the point, the record was not kept for the benefit of historians, but to prevent future trouble with the sheriff. The best part of it is that portion in which the compiler was unconscious of possible historical inquiry.

The study of remote documents permits a more objective appreciation than is often the case with sources nearer at hand, but the same kind of interpretation is due to both. We extract much from a writ of the thirteenth century, but the same kind of information is to be found in the modern document, although we may not need to depend upon it so exclusively.

War De-  
spatches.

Administration in time of war brings into use a quantity of documents which need to be regarded more or less in a class by themselves, in the same way that war is an exceptional, not a ruling condition. The dispatches directing the movements of armies are kept secret in order to blind the enemy, and do not become public until the event is over. This material is of the utmost value to the historian, because he finds in it the real causes of success and failure. Here are the exact words of the order, by

which it can be judged whether it was possible to execute it; the report on conditions of the forces; and innumerable matters which could have been known to only a few persons in command. From the combination of these things the investigator can account for results which even a general could not at the time foresee.

At the same time there are usually documents **Proclamations.** uttered for the view of the public at the moment, beginning with the declaration of war itself; the call to arms; the proclamations; official announcements of battles; messages of the sovereign to the legislature upon which he must depend for support; and various publications designed to affect people at home or the observing nations abroad. All of these fall more or less into the category of strategy. It may be thought best at times to tell the whole truth in order to arouse the people, but the chances seem to be against this plan. In giving the causes for the declaration of war each side may be relied upon to give reasons favorable to itself. Take for example the war of 1812 between England and the United States, and the messages from the two rulers. In the speech from the throne at the opening of parliament, November 8, 1814, the Prince Regent said:

“My Lords and Gentlemen:

“It is with deep regret that I am obliged to announce the continuance of His Majesty’s lamented indisposition.

“It would have given me great satisfaction to have been enabled to communicate to you the termination of the War between this country and the United States of America.

"Although this War originated in the most unprovoked Aggression on the part of the Government of The United States and was calculated to promote the designs of the Common Enemy of Europe against the Rights and Independence of all other Nations, I never have ceased to entertain a sincere desire to bring it to a conclusion on just and honourable terms.

"I am still engaged in Negotiations for this purpose; the success of them must, however, depend on my disposition being met with corresponding sentiments on the part of the Enemy,"<sup>1</sup> etc.

The message from the President of the United States to Congress transmitting the treaty of peace and amity between the United States and His Britannic Majesty, 18th February, 1815, says:

"To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

"I lay before Congress Copies of the Treaty of Peace and Amity between The United States and His Britannic Majesty, which was signed by the Commissioners of both parties at Ghent, on the 24th of December, 1814, and the Ratifications of which have been duly exchanged.

"While performing this act, I congratulate you and our Constituents, upon an event which is highly honorable to the Nation, and terminates, with peculiar felicity, a Campaign signalized by the most brilliant success.

"The late War, although reluctantly declared by Congress, had become a necessary resort, to assert the rights and independence of the Nation. It has been waged with a success which is the natural result of the wisdom of the Legislative Councils, of the Patriotism of the People, of the public spirit of the

<sup>1</sup> British and Foreign State Papers, 1814-15, p. 1.

Militia, and of the valor of the Military and Naval Forces of the Country. Peace, at all times a blessing, is peculiarly welcome, therefore, at a period when the causes for War have ceased to operate; when the Government has demonstrated the efficiency of its powers and defence; and when the Nation can review its conduct without regret, and without reproach."<sup>1</sup>

These are the mild types of the one-sided view. The boastful proclamations of a Napoleon form the other extreme in this class of documents, in which there are all degrees of half truth and prevarication. In many cases the falsity is so obvious that no one is deceived at this late day, but we are obliged to take account of the document because of its effect at the time. The motive must be considered, not in order to justify or condemn the act, but to determine the consequences. The game of war extends from the field into the papers. The deception of the enemy and the encouragement of friends are both employed. It may seem best not to reveal the extent of a disaster, since it would inevitably dishearten the rest of the army, encourage the enemy to press on, and induce the foreign nations to declare in favor of the other side. In modern times it would be likely to affect the borrowing capacity of the government and thus hinder the prosecution of the war. In short, since the papers are uttered for immediate effect, the investigator must find out what they accomplish. In attaining an end such documents have greater weight than private utterances, because they are issued by a government. Whatever may be the contents, it is

Misleading Announcements.

<sup>1</sup> Messages of the Presidents, Vol. I, p. 552.

likely to seem to be truth, unless the government has been utterly discredited, or visibly driven from power. However much we may rebel at the idea, the declarations of a firmly seated government go further in effect than the complaints of an opposition.

Political Cam-  
paigns.

Except that the materials have no official character, one might compare a bitter political campaign to a war. There is likely to be included in it the same exaggerated statement of the devilishness of the opposition, as well as the resort to deceptive tactics, and often outright lying. The investigator does not depend on this literature for the narrative history of the period, but examines it for the motives which actually caused the election of the candidate, or decided the choice of policy.

Diplomatic  
Documents.

Diplomatic papers belong to the domain of administrative documents, since it is through this channel that the laws, treaties, and tacit policy of the state with other nations are executed. It is a kind of state business which is carried on with far less publicity than that of other departments. Law-making, tax-gathering, the trials of criminals, and similar functions of government are purposely carried on openly in order to insure justice in their operation. There is in them more or less of a guarantee of the truth about the procedure, although not necessarily for all statements brought forward by the parties involved. In diplomatic affairs, on the other hand, it has been the policy to take the general public into confidence only after the treaty has been written or the arrangements completed. The process by which this point has been reached



may never come to the eye of the generation which lived under the treaty, but remain hidden in the archives until historians bring the matter to light. When it is set free the correspondence may be published in part, the government reserving the right to decide which papers it is expedient to give to the public. This procedure justifies itself in many cases, because the open discussion of persons and possibilities might awaken unnecessary antagonisms, yet it frequently happens that only a part of the real result is given. The most notorious examples are the secret articles which were entered into more frequently in former centuries than of late, and which sometimes almost nullified the public document. The question of the effect of the negotiation may therefore be lost to the investigator who does not find the secret article, or who is not aware of the reservations and understandings which otherwise accompany the document.

Diplomacy was so long looked upon as a kind of warfare in which any means might be employed to win that the papers emanating from that source have a reputation for deception. There is evidence enough to show that prevarication was a common thing at times, and while the historian has no mission to vindicate the liars, the condition of the governmental conscience is an interesting matter which can be used in estimating the period. In attempting to get at the truth one should distinguish between the kinds of documents and be sure that he is acquainted with the processes of diplomatic negotiation.

Diplomacy  
and Deception.

**Diplomatic  
Procedure.**

Ordinarily the government operates through ambassadors who are sent to the foreign country, either for a special purpose, or for a period of years. The envoy has two duties, one to make known the wishes of his government and the other to report back how things are going. Placing ourselves back in the eighteenth century, for example, it is safe to say that the judicious ambassador does not communicate to the foreign government all that he knows, but that his notes will contain only that part which will incline that power to accede to his wishes. Deception may enter at this point when the ambassador makes statements about the movements of his government which are not so, either to frighten or cajole the opponent into an agreement. In pursuing such a policy he may spread false information among the representatives of other nations at this court, so that their governments may be prevented from taking any action that would spoil his plans.

**Diplomatic  
Reports.**

In his reports to the home government the envoy will give the details of the negotiation and possibly ask for further instructions. He will tell what he knows about the machinations or the opinions of other ambassadors. It is through this channel that any false information of other governments gets carried to its destination. The ambassador will attempt also to give the state of public opinion on questions liable to affect his country; he will watch the progress of laws through the legislature, and endeavor as far as possible to forewarn his government of impending evil, or call attention to advan-

tages in sight. From the Venetian ambassadors of the sixteenth century there was a constant flow of reports which described in great detail not only the diplomatic affairs but also the public events and the manners and morals of the country to which they were accredited. The presumption in respect to these reports is in favor of the truth so far as the intentions of the author are concerned. There would be no good reason for him to deceive the home government unless one imagine the rare case of a treasonable plot in which an ambassador is involved. That it was possible to bribe an agent to influence his master to follow the wishes of the foreigner was true in certain periods, but the chances are against that view of the mass of diplomatic work. The inquiry should usually attempt to find whether the ambassador was well informed, and how far the personal capacity and opportunities of the writer permit him to speak with exactness.

The official papers which record a diplomatic transaction are, in brief, the instructions of the home government; any formal papers transmitted directly from government to government; letters formal and informal between the ambassador and the court to which he is accredited; and finally the reports to the home government. The papers of an event like the Congress of Vienna are theoretically of the same character, since the ambassador is sent to a group of powers at once, instead of a single court, and the public results are embodied in the minutes of the congress and in the treaty there signed. In the nature of things these papers have various relations

Order of Business.

to the truth, as we have seen. Furthermore, to get the complete history of a diplomatic incident it is often necessary to go outside of diplomatic papers. The private correspondence and memoirs of statesmen of the time, the records of legislative committees, and other documents of less formal character may be needed to show the true inwardness of the transaction. These are to be judged according to the class to which they belong. The strictly diplomatic papers require the investigator to keep in mind the double rôle demanded of departments of foreign affairs and their ambassadors. Without necessarily resorting to deception, they have been called upon to satisfy the demands of their own nation and at the same time allay the suspicions of others.

Pitfalls of Diplomatic History.

In the writing of diplomatic history there has been a tendency to exaggerate the importance of small affairs. This is perhaps most conspicuous in the memoirs of those who have participated. Not every interview nor every word of even a great man is necessarily vital to the current of an episode. The history may easily degenerate into tittle-tattle, or into a purely pedestrian recital of connected occurrences, unless the writer has a vigorous conception of the perspective of his period, or of the principle of law and government involved in the issue.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### PRIVATE DOCUMENTS

A VAST mass of material for many reasons interesting to the historian is to be found in the transactions which take place between men in their private capacity. Agreements, accounts, deeds, wills, inventories, and similar documents are relics of the actual life of their time, and bear testimony to many things which their makers were not consciously recording. To a certain degree a business agreement is a public document because the makers leave the record as a third witness to prove the nature of the transaction, but men do not ordinarily write their deeds or their wills as contributions to the social history of their epoch. They have a distinct practical end in view. They desire to have their property reach a certain destination and to the comments of later investigators they are completely indifferent. The conscious personality of the author is thus eliminated, although it was the word of a living being. We are able to treat the paper as a relic like the arrow-head, but as a relic more eloquent of human life.

The inferences to be drawn from business transactions are in large part so obvious that a list of their uses need not be attempted. In a research, however, it is well to consider carefully whether the

Inferences  
from Business  
Papers.

document has been estimated at its full value. A deed of land on a cuneiform fragment strikes us with peculiar force because of its great antiquity. It is interesting to note the forms required by these distant people to make a bargain binding, while at the same time we observe the more important fact that in this early period there was a highly developed system of private property which included lands and many other things. A letter of credit on a clay tablet is also a revelation of the extent and methods of early commerce. We observe that the Italians of the middle ages were not the originators of this important idea, but that the transactions of this remote period were so far-reaching that it was not only necessary but possible to avoid the constant carrying of coin to long distances. The trained historical imagination will connect this isolated relic with the details which are necessarily involved in an exchange of this character. The letter of credit of today performs the same function, but we are not so dependent upon it for information because we have other evidences in abundance. The familiarity of the modern paper may also obscure its real significance until curiosity is awakened by the ancient relic.

#### Wills.

Wills are the transfers of property which take effect after the death of the owner. Their importance in law is very great and accounts for the abundance of this class of material. The attitude of society and custom toward this instrument at various times is a matter of decided interest. The highly cultivated Romans made wills freely, while the

Germans of the same period made none. Early German law and custom gave all children equal rights in the father's goods and a testament was evidently not considered necessary. The evidence for the state of the law is, however, only a part of the matter to be extracted from wills. In modern times the genealogists find in them a harvest of information as to relationships. The testator, in order to be perfectly sure that the proper persons receive his goods, identifies them not only by name but by their relationship. He may say in effect:

"I bequeath to my wife Martha"——

"To my sons George and Henry"——

"To my daughter Mary, wife of John Oldham, of Coventry"——

"To my niece Martha, daughter of my deceased brother James and wife of Henry Ackley, of Northampton—."

Descriptions like these abound everywhere, and the material is frequently required to establish relations between people of historical and political importance. Even the names of the executors give information concerning persons sought for in other connections.

The property bequeathed indicates the wealth and comfort of households in that period, compared with the same or a later date. This is true of all times, but one is particularly struck with the simplicity of the earlier centuries, or of the colonial period in America. The solicitude with which they divided their feather-beds, linen sheets, and warming pans is amusing to this generation, while the meager

lists of ancient furniture, dishes, pots, kettles, and-irons, and simple farming implements give one a feeling of pity which our elders would perhaps have considered wasted sympathy. The inventories of their executors contain the money values of the items and often furnish important clues to the economic situation. Naturally these prices are most useful when taken in connection with other accounts of the same period.

Deeds.

Deeds of land are made and recorded for the purpose of declaring and proving whenever necessary the title to the property. In modern times public record offices are established in order that the title may be readily accessible. In earlier days more depended on the preservation of the deed itself and all great houses had their muniment rooms. Large estates and religious corporations were also accustomed to copy their papers into record books, and many of these cartularies have been preserved. For example, the cartulary of the abbey of Rievaulx in Yorkshire<sup>1</sup> contains with the charters of foundation the deeds of property added to it from time to time, and the various privileges granted by kings, lords, and popes from the year 1132 down to 1534. Taken as a whole the cartulary reveals the extent of the possessions of this monastery and indicates whether the property was compactly situated or scattered far and wide over the kingdom. Taken in detail we gain many important points about the names of places; the forms used at the given date; indications of the boundary lines of

<sup>1</sup> Surtees Society, Vol. LXXXIII.



village and hundred; the extent of woods and fields, by which one may find whether localities were cleared or still wild. In addition to gifts of land outright there were grants of privileges, such as pasturage of cattle, sheep, and swine, rights to cut wood or burn charcoal in the forest, to work iron, and other matters which throw light upon the practical use of the laws of property. The terms of measurement, bovat, carucate, aeras, perticata, tofts, crofts, etc., point to matters of great economic importance.

The mediæval monastic land books of continental Europe are equally interesting. These so-called "traditiones" are full of side-lights upon law and custom, apart from the actual transactions.<sup>1</sup> It is through incidental references that we learn how new lands were taken possession of, when in the gift of a piece of land to a monastery the donor relates how he came to own it. One went with his servants into the waste and made a circuit about the place, marked the boundaries by blazing trees, and took possession by building huts and living three days on the ground. In other cases the relation is not so full, but simply says that "going about he took it." The words "ambitum," "captaverat," "circumeundo," and the like are therefore in this connection full of interesting suggestions, particularly when we find that survivals of this method of establishing boundaries came down through England even into colonial America. It was for a

Mediæval  
Land Records.

<sup>1</sup> Examples in Lacomblet, *Urkundenbuch für die Geschichte des Niederrheins*. Dronke, *Codex diplomaticus Fuldensis*.

long time customary in certain places for the inhabitants to make annual processions around the borders of the parish, although the necessity for such forms had passed away. The name in the Latin deeds for a clearing in German-speaking regions was "rotum" or "rodum" (modern, Rodung), referring to the process of uprooting the wild trees and bushes. The name often clung to the spot long after it became cultivated, so that in the descriptive title of a piece of land or of a locality one may see indications of its origin.<sup>1</sup> The dry details of a deed may be made to render precious fruit. When we find a tract of land conveyed from one person to another "cum servientibus" we have a more substantial testimony to the presence of serfdom than a copy of the law. In the deed the institution is taken as a matter of course.

#### Rent-Rolls.

Rent-rolls, extents, agricultural accounts, and similar documents are evidences of the relations between proprietors and their tenants and subordinates. A rent-roll was for the landowner or monastery what the Domesday Book was to the sovereign. It was a statement of the amount of land or privileges leased to the persons named and the dues which were to be rendered therefor. It was an exhibit of the proprietor's possessions and of the customs of the time. It was an attested document in the sense that it was an open book in the manorial court to which both owner and tenant referred at the annual settlement for the facts agreed upon. One

<sup>1</sup> The celebrated spot on Lake Lucerne known as Rütli derives its name from a clearing in South German dialect.

has no ground for supposing that the relations were otherwise than there indicated. The place for caution is in other inferences to be drawn, for careful reasoning on the part of the investigator is here required.

Private account-books have obtained in modern research a value little dreamed of by the original makers. The study of economic history, both from the administrative and the social point of view, has found material here in great abundance. Particular topics like the development of prices receive light from comparisons over long periods, while the general social welfare may be closely estimated from the comparative cost of various commodities and the value of labor. The amount of this material is so great that a volume might be devoted to its consideration, if one were to attempt to specify the weight of each particular form. Accounts are to be found on Assyrian tablets, on mediæval parchments, and in colonial ledgers. Throughout the whole series they are extremely valuable, though less so in modern times when records can be found in books and newspapers. At all times they should be used in connection with the current politics and legislation. Business is facilitated by the political situation, or the difficulties are increased by the war in progress or the tax law in force. Legislation or agreement may counteract the effect of war, as happened in various localities during the American Revolution. One might expect to find an increase of prices for a time, but a study of a country cobbler's account-book in the Berkshire hills corroborates

Private Account-books.

what other information indicates, that local sentiment, if not law, forbade any change from customary charges. The inquiry should include the contemporary currency, the value of which as a relic best discovered in its associations with other source

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE NEWSPAPER AS A SOURCE OF HISTORY

THE newspaper has become so familiar a part of our daily existence that we are likely to approach it with more or less fixed ideas when searching for historical information. Probably the tendency would be to underestimate its value. We are accustomed to the uncertainties of telegraphic news, and know full well that in the haste to give information the merest hints or conjectures are put forward as facts, only to be changed or contradicted in the next issue. The partisan character of many editorial pages is so well defined that even the news may be colored by the political bias of the management. The sensationalism of the "yellow journal" is an unpleasant phenomenon in modern newspaper history, and the tendency in many cases to triviality, when not to scandal, gives the thoughtful observer an unfavorable view of that whole branch of literature. Yet, notwithstanding the glaring cases of unreliability, it is not necessary to transfer the bad character of one journal to another, and the problem becomes simpler when one observes that the newspaper is composed of a variety of materials which are to be estimated according to the classes to which they belong. The conscious and the unconscious

testimony can be distinguished and likewise the gradations from one to the other.

Object of the  
Newspaper.

In any judgment of contents the critic must accept the fact that "news" is the object for which the journal is primarily supposed to exist, and from which it derives its title. Under modern conditions information is gathered by a multitude of assistants who telegraph at the earliest moment to the paper, or to the news agency, the striking events of their districts. First impressions only can be expected in such haste. Names and details are liable to distortion, particularly when an event is sudden and unexpected. On the other hand, when an important convention meets, or a legislature is in session, the news gatherers are prepared in advance, and the reports of speeches and resolutions may appear in substantially truthful form. For political conventions of state or local character the newspaper may furnish the only published record. For legal assemblies the investigator will be likely to go to official documents, or to reports more deliberately prepared than those in the newspaper, for matters occurring in the last half century. The earlier journals had some advantage in depending on letters rather than the telegraph. Their news was very slow in arriving, but was likely to be more deliberately prepared, and the responsible writer was frequently named.

Press Laws.

Another consideration in estimating the fulness of news is to be found in the press laws in force at the time. The rigorous supervision of newspapers under Napoleon I and the censorship in Russia

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have affected not only the expression of political opinion, but the presentation of current events as well. Napoleon reduced the number of papers to a mere dozen which could be easily controlled, and used their columns to spread abroad the news as the government would like to see it. Despotie rulers have frequently forbidden all reference to specified matters, and editors have been driven to most ingenious expedients to convey the information in phrases of double meaning. In fact all the way down to the middle of the nineteenth century there have been on the continent of Europe restrictions of the press in greater or less degree, and it is important for the investigator to take into account the exact limitations at the moment. Under complete freedom of the press the responsibility for truth lies more heavily upon the journal.

In some cases the newspaper may be the repository of a public document duly authenticated, as in the following example from the Boston Gazette and Country Journal of March 12, 1770: Record of  
Public Acts.

"The Inhabitants of the Town of Acton, at their annual Town Meeting on the first Monday of March, 1770, taking into consideration, the distressed circumstances, that this Province and all North-America are involv'd in, by reason of the acts of Parliament imposing Duties and Taxes, upon the Inhabitants of North-America, for the sole purpose to raise a Revenue, and when the Royal Ear seems to be stopt against all our humble Prayers' and Petitions, for redress of Grievances, that this Land is involv'd in, and considering the salutary Measures that the Body of Merchants and Traders in this province have come

into, in order for the redress of the many troubles that we are involv'd in, and to support and maintain our Charter Rights, and Privileges, and to prevent our total Ruin and Destruction: Taking all these things into serious Consideration, came into the following votes.

"VOTED, That we will use our utmost Endeavours to encourage and support the Body of Merchants and Traders, in their salutary Endeavours to retrieve this Province out of its present Distresses, to whom this Town vote their Thanks for the constitutional and spirited Measures pursued by them for the good of this Province.

"VOTED, That from this Time, we will have no commercial, or social connection with those, who at this Time do refuse to contribute to the relief of this abused Country, especially, those that import British Goods, contrary to the Agreement of the Body of Merchants in Boston, or elsewhere, that we will not afford them our Custom, but treat them with the utmost Neglect, and all those who countenance them.

"VOTED, That we will use our utmost Endeavours, to prevent the Consumption of all foreign Superfluities, and that we will use our utmost Endeavours, to promote and encourage our own Manufactures.

"VOTED, That the Town Clerk transmit a Copy of these votes of the Town, to the Committee of Merchants of Inspection at Boston.

"A true Copy Attested,

"FRANCIS FAULKNER,

"Town Clerk."

The authorized record of such a town meeting is the book of the town clerk, but in the absence of that, or for the investigation of public opinion at that moment, such an attested copy in a newspaper has the special value of showing the publicity of the



action. Where the newspaper seems to be the only source of information on a matter of vital importance we need only to recollect that the journal as a whole is not a guarantor of accuracy, but that each item of news, whether printed anonymously or not, had an individual behind it whose qualifications for this task should be weighed if necessary. The ephemeral unimportance of most of the news need not blind us to the fact that a really essential subject requires the same method of proof as a chronicle or a book. In such a case the investigator should get back of the newspaper as near as possible to persons and circumstances from which the news emanated.

In estimating the editorial department one Editorials. naturally considers the personal equation. Whether controlled by an individual or by a corporation, there is some guiding hand whose policy can be made visible. The subjects of editorial treatment are many and in large part have to do with the future rather than with the past. Questions of civic improvement and political policy are more often treated in a manner exhortative and prophetic rather than historical, yet a demand for a reform is a testimony to existing conditions. There is also much comment on current events. Here is a place where the editor can easily give a personal or party tinge to the matters of the day without wilfully prevaricating, yet this tendency is for the most part readily detected and requires only the most obvious methods of inquiry to control.

The chief interest of the news and editorial Interpretation  
of News. sections of a journal lies in the fact that this is the

form in which the news on a certain date was presented to the public. Whatever may have been the real facts, a certain portion of the reading world, or perhaps the whole newspaper constituency, received information in the given form. At critical junctures the importance of this is obvious. If a false rumor of invasion fills the inhabitants with panic, or drives them to destroy the government, because of supposed weakness or treason, the means by which this news was diffused and the extent of its circulation are matters for careful estimation. We notice this at once in the French Revolution or in the American Civil War, but the diffusion of news during ordinary times is also full of significance from the social and intellectual point of view. The character of the matter daily or weekly spread before the people, whether it is serious or trivial, is a factor which cannot be overlooked. The social and political opinions inculcated by the newspaper must be estimated in various ways. The organ of some obscure religious sect, or of some bizarre political theory, ordinarily has a limited circulation, and in consequence a feeble influence. The newspapers of the eighteenth century were costly and for that reason did not reach a large class of people who now read their papers daily.

Political  
Leadership.

The nineteenth century was conspicuous for great political journals which stood by their parties through thick and thin. No turn of events or even unfaithfulness in office could swerve them from their loyalty. It was the period of the great political editor, whose word was accepted as gospel by thou-

sands of party liegemen, and whose journal was an influence which must be reckoned with. To an equal extent such a paper may be said to be one of the voices of public sentiment. This personage has now disappeared and the newspaper is a commercial enterprise which depends upon advertisements for its returns. The great daily is sold at about the cost of the paper and is read by an extraordinarily widespread constituency. The influence of the modern newspaper is due to the extent and character of its news and to the pervasiveness of editions, rather than to the opinions of its editorial staff. As a moral factor it has to meet the pressure of the counting-room and does not always resist the domination of its advertising interests.

Many elements, therefore, enter into the historical estimate of public journals. Great caution should be used in drawing conclusions as to the state of public opinion. This is one of the most elusive problems in history, and the newspaper may, or may not, express the sentiments of the great body of people. The journal is but one factor in the estimate. Its conscious efforts to record the immediate past are subject to many conditions of personality and environment, both in respect to publishers and readers. The study of these circumstances is not simply a necessary evil, but yields results of another kind of great interest and importance in themselves, namely, the social conditions of the people. The greater proportion of the material derived from the newspapers is of this order. The unconscious evidences of intellectual and social

Public  
Opinion.

conditions are the most numerous and the most valuable.

Early News-  
papers.

The newspapers of remote times are most striking because of the things in them which seem different from the present. The weekly Gazette of London, September 9, 1658, contains the English news of the previous week. The death of Oliver Cromwell is the most important subject. The news from Paris is dated September 5. From Stockholm information has been a month on the way; from Vienna since August 12; from "Hamborough" (Hamburg) since August 22. For some reason a report from Amsterdam of July 4 is interesting enough to print in September. The transmission of news did not change greatly for a long time after this period. The London Times of October 3, 1798, contains the official account of Lord Nelson's victory in the battle of the Nile. This occurred August 1, 1798, and the official news "arrived at the Admiralty yesterday morning at a quarter past eleven o'clock." The report was brought by Captain Capel, who was detained one day by quarantine at Naples.

Slow Commu-  
nication.

The official account of the battle of Copenhagen of April 2, 1801, was made public in a Gazette of April 15 and reprinted by the London Times of the sixteenth. The same paper states also that it had received Paris journals up to the 13th of April on the day before at "3 o'clock in the morning long after our paper had gone to press." This is comparatively rapid if the time of publication in Paris was like that of the Times of November 7, 1805,

when the "publication of the news-men was finished this morning at half-past seven." The paper of that day, however, may have been early, for it contained the official account of the battle of Trafalgar

October 21, 1805. In the colonies the foreign news was still slower in arriving. The Boston Evening Post of Monday, January 29, 1770, offered

to the public of that city "the freshest and most important Advices Foreign and Domestick." The news from London is in the form of a letter dated October 20. New York matters are dated January 1. The current events of interest in Boston were the meetings of the citizens in Faneuil Hall January 1-23, to take action on the importation of British goods, particularly tea. The letter of Governor Hutchinson ordering the agitation to cease, and the resolutions of the meeting in reply, are reported one week after their occurrence. The Evening Post, consequently, cannot be regarded as exerting an inflammatory influence upon that particular event. Numerous signed letters disclaiming any connection with reported consignments of merchandise show how powerful was the public sentiment against importations at that moment. It was desirable to avoid even the suspicion of handling British wares.

The Boston Gazette and Country Journal of February 4, 1771, says: "Last Monday (January 31) Captain Griste arrived at Marblehead from Plymouth, which he left so late as the 25th of December; from the Prints bro't by him, we have among other Articles, the following interesting

Speech of Lord C—m.” This is quoted from a London report of December 6, and meets with such approval that “It is proposed that Public Prayer in all the religious Assemblies in America, be every Lord’s Day devotedly offer’d up to Heaven, for the Preservation of the inestimable Life of the Earl of Chatham.” This was a quick voyage for the period but illustrates again how much the investigator is obliged to reckon with the infrequency and irregularity of ships. In periods where no stated schedules of voyages existed these factors might add considerably to the length of time between communications.

Advertisements.

Advertisements afford a mine of information respecting social customs and public affairs. Not only business methods and economic questions are displayed, but the habits and the moral conceptions of the people are brought into evidence. From the London Gazette of 1658 it is clear that the tea-habit had not yet fastened very firmly upon the English people, for the drug itself needed to be described as follows:

“*That Excellent*, and by all Physitians approved *China Drink*, called by the *Chineans Toha*, by other Nations *Tay*, alias *Tee*, is sold at the *Sultaness Head* a *cophee house* in *Sweetings Rents* by the *Royal Exchange*, London.”

The advertisements of a newly published book conform to our notions of the period received from other sources:

“A Few Sighs from Hell, or the Groans of a Damned Soule,” being an exposition of those words in the sixteenth of *Luke* concerning the Rich Man and the

Beggar, wherein is discovered the lamentable state of the damned, their cries, their desires in their distresses, with the determination of God upon them. A good warning word to sinners, both old and young, to take into consideration betimes lest they come into the same place of torment. Also a brief discourse touching the profitableness of the Holy Scriptures by that poor servant of Jesus Christ, *John Bunyan*."

In the same number may be found the remedies for the ills of this life:

"At the Sign of the Bore's Head over against the Naked Boy at the lower end of Bread Street, are to be had the usual Medicines, prepared by the Art of Pyroteckny (According to the Doctrine of Paracelful [Paracelsus] and Helmont) by which is perfectly, safely and speedily cured, all distempers incidental to Human Nature."

The amount of advertising in the earlier journals is quite limited. For the eighteenth century one may take an example of business management from the Public Advertiser of London, for Thursday, November 4, 1779. The price of the paper is three-pence. On the margin of the fourth page is an embossed stamp showing that a stamp-duty of one half-penny has been paid. On the last page is a colophon containing office matters to this effect:

"London, printed by H. S. Woodfall (No. 1) the corner of Ivy Lane, Paternoster Row; where Letters to the Author (Post-paid) are received, and Advertisements of a moderate length are taken at Three Shillings each. Advertisements are also taken in at Lloyd's Coffee-House in Lombard Street."

Advertisements of lotteries are numerous throughout this period. The respectability of such enter-

prises is evinced in an item in the paper just quoted:

"All the Shares and Chances are stamped at the Bank of England, where the original Tickets are deposited agreeable to Act of Parliament."

**Stage coaches.** Matters relating to transportation and communication may be sought in the advertisements of stage lines and posts. These items are striking when compared with modern conditions, and extremely valuable in reckoning the social solidarity of the territory in question. The distance between Baltimore and Washington is forty miles and is now traversed by railway trains in forty-five minutes at least once an hour. About a century ago the daily limited express stage needed eight hours for the journey and charged ten cents a mile instead of three. The slower stage left at four o'clock in the morning and promised to make connection with the steam boats leaving Washington at four in the afternoon. The mail stage for Philadelphia left daily at 2 P. M. and received ten dollars for each fare.<sup>1</sup>

Previously to the Revolution Baltimore and Frederick were connected at least once a week:

"The subscriber begs to inform the Public that he rides POST from the town of Baltimore to the town of Frederick (once a week) from whence another Post rides to the town of Winchester, in Virginia. Those who have any commands may depend upon having their business faithfully executed. He sets off from Mr. WILLIAM ADAM'S, at the sign of the Race Horses in Baltimore, every SATURDAY at one o'clock. Absalom Bonham."

<sup>1</sup> Baltimore Patriot and Evening Advertiser, Sept. 1, 1815.



## NEWSPAPER AS A SOURCE OF HISTORY 227

"Said Bonham takes in subscriptions for the Maryland Journal, and the Pennsylvania Chronicle, etc."<sup>1</sup>

The advertisements for state and municipal contracts, the notices of elections and other legal announcements will give the future historian many points of practical information as to governmental activity which appear only in a general way in laws and constitutions. The business side of slavery and indentured servitude appears in realistic form. In view of later events it is a little startling to read the following in the Boston Evening Post of January 29, 1770:

"TO BE SOLD, a young NEGRO MAN. En- Slavery. quire of the Printers."

The servant question in Maryland in 1773 receives light from the advertisements for lost property. The following is from Prince George's County, "near Queen Ann," 1773:

RAN away from the Subscriber, some time in December, 1772, Negro PRINCE, a tall slim fellow; has several hacks in his forehead; he was taken up at Susquehanna Lower Ferry, but made his escape, and is often seen in the neighborhood. Whoever takes up the said Negro, and secures him in gaol, so that the owner may get him again, shall have FIVE POUNDS reward, or if brought home TEN POUNDS reward, and reasonable charges paid by

RICHARD BENNET HALL.<sup>2</sup>

### FIVE POUNDS REWARD.

Ran away from the subscriber, living in Shepherd's Town, some time in October last, a Mulatto Boy

<sup>1</sup> Maryland Journal, etc., August 20, 1773.

<sup>2</sup> Maryland Journal, etc., August 20, 1773.

named Toby, about 14 years of age, and had a scar on the right side of his throat.—Had on, when went away, an old brown jacket, tow shirt and check trousers, which are supposed to be worn out by time.—Whoever takes up the said Mulatto, and secures him in any gaol, so that his master may have him again, shall receive the above reward from

JOHN CLAWSON

N.B.—All masters of vessels are forewarned not to take him off at their peril.<sup>1</sup>

### EIGHT DOLLARS REWARD.

Indentured  
Servants.

RAN away, on the 27th of last September, from the subscriber, living in Baltimore County, Benjamin Rogers, Esqr's mill, a Dutch convict servant woman named Rosannah Unrick, about 30 years of age, 5 feet 9 or 10 inches high; had on, and took with her, an old felt hat, a blue flowered Barcelona handkerchief, two check linen ditto, one check apron, an old speckled flannel bed gown, and linen for another cut out, but not made up, and a linsey petticoat which were all too short for her, one old quilt, which had been turned and lengthened, two pairs of mens stockings, one pair of womens' shoes, which are too small for her, one pair of old mens' shoes, and likewise yards of home-made linen. She is a leather-dresser by trade. Whoever takes up said woman, and secures her, so that her master gets her again, shall have the above reward, and reasonable charges paid brought home, including what the law allows, paid by

DANIEL REED

N.B.—She has a scald head, has her hair cut off, and was under cure for the venereal disorder when she went away.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Maryland Journal, etc., Dec. 18 to Dec. 30, 1773.

<sup>2</sup> The Maryland Journal, etc., Dec. 18 to Dec. 30, 1773.

BALTIMORE COUNTY, DEC. 10, 1773.

EIGHT DOLLARS REWARD.

RAN away from the subscriber living near Deer- Indentured  
Creek, near Mr. Samuel Ashmead's mill, a convict Servants.  
servant man named RALPH HATELEY, about  
25 years of age, 5 feet 3 or 4 inches high, has short  
brown hair, and a bold daring look. Had on an old  
blue broadcloth coat, something too long for him, serge  
acket, tow trousers, old shoes and stockings, very much  
addicted to drinking and gaming, and it is supposed he  
has forged a pass. Whoever secures said servant in  
any of his Majesty's gaols, or brings him to me the  
subscriber, shall have the above reward, and reason-  
able charges, if brought home, paid by

DANIEL PRESTON.<sup>1</sup>

TEN POUNDS REWARD.

RAN away, this morning, from the subscriber,  
living in Tawny-Town, Frederick County, Maryland,  
an Irish servant man named Hugh M'Kain, by trade a  
aylor, about five feet four inches high, small and  
lender, his forehead almost bald, black hair, a pale  
 visage, a great snuffer, much given to liquor, has a  
mark or scar under his left nostril; had on, and took  
with him, a half-worn beaver hat, a light coloured  
half-worn Wilton coat, the hind part and the left fore  
part of a new green duroy jacket, a white linen and a  
heck shirt, a brown pair of half worn cloth breeches,  
green pair, a ribb'd pair, and a plain pair of grey  
stockings, and old shoes, with buckles. He is known  
all over Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the  
Jerseys. Whoever takes up said servant, and secures  
him in any of his Majesty's gaols, so that his master  
may get him again, or bring him home, shall have the  
above reward, and reasonable charges, paid by me.<sup>2</sup>

Nov. 1, 1773.

CONRAD BONER.

<sup>1</sup> The Maryland Journal, etc., Dec. 18 to Dec. 30, 1773.

<sup>2</sup> The Maryland Journal, etc., Dec. 18-Dec. 30, 1773.

The variety of historical material to be found in newspapers is by no means exhausted by the citations. The selections have been given in order to suggest more clearly that the journal must be analyzed and the materials subjected to criticism and valuation according to the classes to which they belong. In fact, the greater part of the content of the newspaper is to be regarded in the light of the period, from which the evidence is inferred rather than direct.

## CHAPTER XX

### RELICS

IN the English language the word "relic" attaches Definition.  
itself with particular affinity to material objects. Arrowheads, bronze chisels, iron daggers, terra-cotta vases, and everything else that man has fashioned for use or ornament seem naturally to be relics of the period of their origin. Letters, poems, minutes, deeds, account-books and the like require a second thought to take them out of their special class and consider them abstractly as relics. For that reason it might have been better to comment upon implements first in order, and then to emphasize the significance of the mute materials before proceeding to those which bear written words. The value of a law as a relic might perhaps have stood out more distinctly, and the essential unity of the war club and the writ could have been repeated to advantage, but the plan of this work is to follow the ordinary process in constructing an historical narrative, which is to extract what can be had from the chronicler, then proceed to the documents, and afterward look for help among the material objects. This instinctive method is correct, as we have noticed before, because without the narrative there would be no connected story; yet the value of the relic need not on that account be underestimated, for there are valuable

points to be drawn from relics also when the narrative is absent. Because the term "prehistoric" is applied to periods before written accounts appeared, it is not to be assumed that the traces of man's handiwork have no historic value in themselves.

Association.

The significance of a relic is found in its association. Beginning with the stratum of soil in which it was found, the grave in which it was deposited, the house of which it was an ornament, the most diligent inquiry must be made as to its surroundings and as to other relics in its company. The relic elucidates and is elucidated by its neighbors. The comparison may embrace a brief period or may cover an unlimited time, as when we examine a rude stone hammer and accept it as an example of the mechanical art of its day, or when we place it in a row with a series from the neolithic age through the bronze and iron periods down to the highly finished steel products in the infinite variety of the present. We may note the rough processes of early manufacture and weigh the economic effort expended, as one American archaeologist himself pounded out with another stone the groove of a stone hammer and thus acquired an estimate of the time which savage man required to make this simple tool. If we measure the days needed to make a stone axe and then how long it took to chop down a tree with such an ineffective instrument, we shall find some very practical reasons why man advanced so slowly in economic comfort.

In the study of cost and effectiveness the application of association is also necessary. There must be

other instruments at hand with which to make comparison, and the kind of trees to be cut makes a great difference. Houses built of pine logs come easier than those of hardwood, and natural caves cost less than either. In an extended comparison of nails we may go from primitive thorns and pegs to the wire objects which are issued in myriads today. The difference in economic effect is a matter almost beyond calculation, even between this day and the time of our colonial ancestors, when nails were made one at a time by a blacksmith, instead of by automatic machinery. The difficulty in arriving at a proper estimate comes from the larger number of elements which must be taken into comparison as we approach the later period.

The extent of the study of associations will depend on the theme in hand. We may approach the whole civilization of a brief period, or we may trace the history of a single instrument. In both cases the greatest care is required in order to be sure that the circumstances and conditions are suitable for comparison. History does not repeat itself unless the conditions are identical. We may be interested in a series of musical instruments ranging from a gourd to a grand piano. The specimens show, indeed, the development of string music, but if one piece is brought from Honduras and others from Central Africa, it is not certain that the development from one stage to another was due to the same causes.

Caution in  
Comparison.

The natural productions of the environment affect differently the native ingenuity of man. For example, a very pretty display may be made in showing

Effect of Nat-  
ural Produc-  
tions.

the evolution of the jack-knife. If gathered from the world at large, rough stone is followed by polished stone, and these by bronze, iron, and steel. The beautiful glass knives used for sacrificial purposes in Mexico would develop only in a country where obsidian or natural glass is readily found. The rough knives made of steel pieces tied to bone handles are the products of Eskimo industry in a country where the bones of water animals are the most convenient things to use. Both of these examples are interesting cases of primitive ingenuity, but are not necessary in the direct line of the effective evolution of the knife.

Evolution of  
Implements.

The study of relics in series may be applied to every form of implement or article of ornamentation. The development of writing materials; of instruments for striking fire; of weaving apparatus; of aids to transportation, and hundreds of other products of the human hand may be followed with interest and profit. This method is a contemplation of the race as a whole, or a study in comparative ethnology. Another fruitful practice is to study a single people, or a given period, through its products, in order to determine how far the various features of its civilization were developed at the same time. In a primitive period the relics are less abundant and the task is apparently simpler than in later ages, but the more remote the time, the more is the risk that portions of the data have perished. Consequently, when points of observation are scarce, the more rigid must be the deductions and the more severely must the imagination be kept in control. The



Lake Dwellers of Switzerland affect our curiosity deeply. The very position of their houses opens a query. Did they build out over the water for protection against wild beasts or against human enemies? No answer to that question can be made, nor are there any data for a possible political or national history of the tribes who resided in this region. Only this is clear, that the borders of nearly all of the important lakes have been inhabited ever since man was in his primitive state. From the early stone age through the bronze and iron periods to historic times the evidences of man's presence are abundant and the sequence is clearly continuous, for the relics of one age are often found beside those of the next advanced.

In the examination of the lake-dwellings for individual contents it is often found that one settlement contains only stone-age implements and another near by is of the age of bronze. Taking the bronze period by itself, it is important to find how many different utensils, ornaments, or other relics are found together. Side by side with bronze hatchets lie reaping-hooks. Further on are the seeds of wheat, barley and oats, and with them the bones of sheep, of certain wild animals and of the domestic dog. It is obvious that the inhabitants were in part agriculturalists and in part hunters. Bronze fish-hooks with barbs show how early that method of making a hook effective was invented. Implements used in spinning and weaving are supplemented even by specimens of cloth. From the bronze pins and buckles found in the same bed

Comparison of  
Prehistoric  
Ages.

of mud we are able to estimate the artistic development of the period, and in many other ways the life of that age may be appreciated through the scientific use of the imagination. In fact, the imagination leaps into activity at once. It is needful only that the association shall be accurately observed to reconstruct a living community from these tiny fragments.

**Craniology.**

The theory was formerly accepted without question that Western Europe was settled by migrations of "Aryans" from Asia, but the study of the relics of primitive man has changed the aspect of things. Man left no written record of his doings, but when he was cut off in the midst of his toil he left his implements behind and his mortal remains were affectionately deposited in the earth. His bones have remained until this day, and recent science has taken them into account. His frame has been measured, the dimensions of his skull have been formulated, and we arrive at the very interesting conclusion that the same type of man has been residing continuously in Western Europe since the age of the cave-dwellers. This does not prevent waves of early culture from passing westward from the Orient, but offers serious difficulties to the theory of race migration. The study of prehistoric craniology has therefore changed the whole character of the problem.

**Human Remains.**

It seems a gruesome task to pry open the tombs of the ancient Pharaohs and to rummage in the sacred relics of the royal dead, although many thousand years have passed since some of them were laid to rest. The results, however, are of the

coinage.<sup>1</sup> Numerous great scholars have also devoted their attention to Greek coins alone.

The questions which arise from the study of Origin. numismatics illustrate the use of relics during periods when written material is also present in greater or less degree. First of all, the historian finds himself in the presence of rude specimens which show that the beginning of coinage could not have been far away. Who first thought of stamping pieces of metal with signs for a circulating medium? The barter of pieces or bars of gold and silver, or even of ornaments of those metals, must have begun at a very early date, but the discovery of the device by which the piece might always be known without the trouble of weighing was an event of great importance. This invention has played a part in the history of civilization which must be ranked with those later conveniences, banking and exchange. The birthplace of coinage is still in controversy, although Aristotle and other early writers thought they knew. There are many good reasons for believing that the electrum coins of Lydia in Asia Minor are the earliest examples, but in any case, when you have located the beginning of coinage you have undoubtedly put your finger on the spot where commerce was at high pressure for its time. Where commerce flourishes there is likely to be a relatively high degree of civilization, and the coins may be the index of its progress from place to place.

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, *Geschichte des römischen Münzwesens*, 1 vol., 1860. The French translation is better on account of later and more abundant footnotes, 4 vols.

the depth of the alluvial deposit of the Nile, the annual amount of which can be estimated, the fact has become clear that the Nile valley was occupied by highly civilized races thousands of years earlier than was formerly believed.

Modern Interest in Antiquity.

Not the least interesting reflection upon relics in general is the fact that the common things of ancient life are the curiosities of the present generation. The implements, beds, chairs, dress, and ornaments of the forefathers are collected and exhibited for study and entertainment. The remains of the Egyptians themselves are placed in cases for the passing crowd to admire. In the British Museum one may see a stone age man in his sandstone grave, replaced exactly as found, with the flint implements and pottery which were buried with him before the Pharaohs appeared on the scene. It is a most instructive exhibit of all the factors which must be considered when such a find is opened *in situ*, and at the same time it is a commentary on the spirit of the present age.

Coins.

Perhaps the most complete series of relics of the ancient world is found in coins. Where other forms of art are fragmentary, where architecture is ruinous and sculpture survives in part, the coins are continuous and numerically abundant. Numismatics, therefore, is an important branch of archaeology and contributes largely to the knowledge of classical history. Appreciation of this importance is shown in the fact that Theodore Mommsen the foremost historian of Rome, became at the same time one of the greatest authorities on it

coinage.<sup>1</sup> Numerous great scholars have also devoted their attention to Greek coins alone.

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<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, *Geschichte des römischen Münzwesens*, 1 vol., 1860. The French translation is better on account of later and more abundant footnotes, 4 vols.

**Inferences  
from Weight.**

The earliest coins are so rude in appearance that one is inclined to wonder if they could have been of much advantage. At first they are mere pellets of metal upon which a punch mark has been struck, indicating not much more than the fact that the piece is a little different from an unpunched nugget. The marks gradually become figures of animals, or men, and eventually works of art, but for a long time there are many small irregularities in size and appearance, with no signs of the denomination, so that it would seem hard even for the ancients to be certain of the value of the piece. Investigation, however, reveals beneath the irregularities of shape a highly developed system of weights and measures. The test of the balance upon the coins themselves confirms and expands the information gathered elsewhere as to the standards in common use, and while in search of light on this matter the interesting fact appears that the weights of the Grecian Archipelago are based upon the standards of the valley of the Euphrates. A long vista of possibilities is at once brought in line by these connections. The balance also reveals the relative value of gold and silver in the estimation of the ancients. This seems to have remained pretty steadily through Greek and Roman times about thirteen and one third to one, and most ingenious expedients were employed at times by the Greeks to provide silver coins which were exact equivalents or exact multiples of the gold coins and yet observed the ratio of the metals.

**Coin Types.**

The long series of coin types offer most interesting data concerning the civilization of ancient cities.

Every town of Greece had its patron deity and the emblems of that god or hero are almost certain to be found on its coins. The turtle for Aphrodite, the owl for Athena, for examples, are the most primitive representations of those gods, but later fanciful portraits occupy the chief position while the emblems continue on the reverse, or in subordinate place. Along with these appear symbols representing the person or authorities who issued the coin, and we have most interesting combinations of religious and secular information. The representations on the coins are both heraldic and mythological and furnish indelible evidence of the presence of the given worship in that city, and by comparison of a large number the extent of the popularity of certain gods or the political relations of one place with another are clearly evident. The colonists of Greece carried with them into Italy and Sicily both the hearth fires and the religious emblems of the mother-cities, and for a time their connections can be identified by the coins. In Greece itself federations of cities occurred at various times and the records are corroborated by the coins. In fact, the coins furnish evidence of political combinations which would be unknown without their testimony.

Since the possession of the right to strike coins was considered an attribute of sovereignty, the presence of so many varieties in Greece is an eloquent testimonial to the local independence of its cities. The writers tell us that almost every town was an autonomous state, but the situation is made decidedly impressive when we find more than fifteen hundred

Independence  
of Cities.

varieties of city coins. Moreover, coins have been uncovered which were struck by cities which have disappeared entirely from the records and whose existence is known only by the specimens of money which once circulated in their precincts. All that is known about a Greek kingdom in India is derived from its surviving coins.<sup>1</sup>

Art Value of  
Coins.

To the archæologist the emblems on the coins are extremely helpful. The attributes of the deities, the form which the worship followed in a given place, the implements of the age, the instruments for striking coins, the forms of dress, and numerous other matters receive light from numismatics. Occasionally an ancient building is represented and in some cases the only explanation of a missing detail is to be found on a coin. From the point of view of art the coins afford the most complete and consecutive expression of progress. Architecture has been destroyed, sculpture is fragmentary in amount and mutilated in condition, but the coins have been so well preserved that they afford abundant evidence of the art sense of the various periods. For the most part the state of art corresponds to the conditions of architecture and sculpture in the same period and serves to show simply another form of refinement, but we are indebted to the coin engravers for many additional expressions. Some of the most beautiful products of the engraver's art the world has ever seen appeared on the coins of Greece and Sicily.

In modern history coins have neither the sig-

<sup>1</sup> Gardner, *New Chapters in Greek History*, Ch. I.



nificance nor the art value of their ancient prototypes. In art the old freedom has become subordinated to mechanical devices which prevent abrasion and permit the stacking of money in piles. The persistence of hand-work in the manufacture of money is, however, a noteworthy phenomenon. All through the middle ages coins were struck one at a time with hammer and dies exactly as during the times of the Greeks and Romans. Not till the sixteenth century was a screw press invented, and the power press did not appear until the nineteenth.

The study of monetary systems gains in importance as the centuries proceed, but the information is no longer dependent on the coins themselves. The knowledge of the mediæval situation is amplified by the surviving specimens of money, but the theory of money was more and more recorded in writing as time went on. The coins indicate the variations from standard, the debasements of currency, which are so often spoken of in the authors, and furnish for the most part a melancholy exhibit of the decline of art. The usefulness of this portion of these relics is, therefore, chiefly corroboratory. The distribution of coinage in the middle ages is, however, an illuminating topic of inquiry. Pieces of Roman or Arabic money are found, for example, in the excavations of Norway, and the evidence of some kind of contact with the southern peoples is conclusive. The accumulated instances of widely scattered money form a body of most important testimony concerning movements of civilization which otherwise might not have been suspected.

Mediæval  
Money.

**Architecture.**

Architecture as a relic of human thought and handiwork offers numerous important points of view for interpretation. Of these the economic bearing of materials is decidedly significant. Not only do the mud huts, palm-leaf shelters, and sun-dried brick cabins of primitive peoples indicate the natural factors which determined their modes of existence, but also in the higher grades of civilization we may see the effects of natural resources and environment which have been only in part overcome. The pioneer naturally builds his first house either of logs or of sod, and as a whole the people of the United States and Canada, owing to the prevailing cheapness of wood, are dwellers in frame houses. European countries have passed beyond this stage, and the difference in economic investment between buildings of wood and buildings of brick or stone cannot be neglected in measuring the rapidity or stability of progress.

The relations of architecture and culture have been affected not a little by the materials used. Starting first with available substances, the ingenuity of man has been expended in improving and decorating his habitation with materials nearest at hand until he now searches the globe for marbles or mahoganies to give the touch of beauty or of rarity. It may be questioned whether refinement of taste in personal surroundings is always an evidence of moral advancement, nor are luxurious requirements in themselves an evidence of intellectual superiority. Yet, whatever judgment may be passed upon this, the presence of these tendencies is highly significant.

and the amount of time and effort which a given social group will devote to the convenience and beauty of its surroundings must be taken into account in estimating the degree of its civilization.

Not less interesting is the nature of the public buildings which characterize a given period. In ancient Greece the striking forms of architecture are the temples and the theatres. In the middle ages the temple alone absorbed the attention of those who sought the highest expression in that art. In this generation the religious life is no longer found in a few great churches, but in a multitude of smaller houses of worship, and must divide attention with hospitals and charitable institutions. Education has come forward, and its universities and libraries express the trend of public interest; while the most expansive, though not always the most beautiful, forms of architecture are the seats of government.

Periods have also had their distinctive ideals of grandeur. The Egyptians sought to impress by the very size and weight of their pyramids and colossal statues, and the beauty of their temples is overshadowed by their massive proportions. This factor is perhaps more conspicuous in Egypt than elsewhere, but every age has been infected with the same ambition. Gothic temples eventually soared to enormous proportions and the modern skyscrapers look down upon Babel. Apparently the interpretation of size consists in finding the forms in which a constant factor expresses itself from age to age.

The study of Gothic architecture as one of the material productions of man's hand offers a most

Public Build-  
ings.

The Element  
of Grandeur.

Gothic.

interesting field for the exercise of constructive historical interpretation. The period of its life history is so remote from the present that the student can approach the subject with entire detachment. In fact, the inquirer must recreate the very atmosphere which inspired this form of art, and he runs considerable risk in the attempt. Unlike the architecture of antiquity, the mediæval churches have survived abundantly in their entirety and the subject matter of study comes down almost unimpaired. Moreover, the architectural forms are beautiful in themselves and reward the most exhaustive attention. The inquiry extends into infinite ramifications throughout the social web. The religious motives, the extent of participation, the long periods of building, the methods of the building trades, the seeming affectionate care in decoration, and innumerable other questions find answers in part and suggest further interesting speculation. It is a study of intellectual as well as religious expression, because the Gothic cathedral is an engineering feat of constantly expanding proportions and a task which in its time monopolized the attention of the public.

Control of the  
Imagination.

The interpretation of relics cannot be exhausted in a single chapter. Only a few indications have been offered as to the way in which the subject should be approached. To the imaginative person the actual relics of a past age are naturally full of suggestion and speculation. The only caution throughout the study is to keep the imagination under control, and to make sure that the interpreta-

tion is based on sound reasoning, not upon fantasy.

Finally, one ought to observe the great advantage which comes to the historian who occupies a field where both written history and archæological remains are abundant. Greece and Rome left behind great literatures with a vast amount of inscriptions and material relics, and almost every period since is illustrated by an ever increasing quantity both of records and of survivals.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE NATURE OF HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

IN the description and criticism of the various kinds of historical material it has been necessary continually to be drawing conclusions and passing judgment upon smaller groups of facts. The processes of historical reasoning have been applied to particular cases which must be combined later into the general narrative. Before proceeding to this combination it will be well to formulate conclusions as to the nature of the operation, and as to the relative value of historical materials.

Fallibility of  
Evidence.

First, as to the fallibility of evidence. In order to avoid the pitfalls which beset the path of the investigator it has been necessary to call attention to many sources of error and many malicious distortions of fact. If placed together these frailties make a long and painful list. Knowing well the natural weaknesses and fallibility of mankind under the best conditions, men are inclined at times to throw the whole thing overboard. There have always been those who declared history a pack of lies, or a "fable convenue," which a fond world upholds because entertaining, or because it bolsters up the pride of man and excuses existing institutions. Even the Psalmist said in his haste all men are liars, and never seemed to find leisure to take back the

statement. Indeed, it has been seriously maintained that all historians are miserable offenders and there is no health in them. Attempts have been made to explain this as an inevitable phenomenon due to natural reasons. Laplace contended that a fact by being transmitted several generations lost clearness in the same way that the vision is obscured by the interposition of successive plates of glass. This idea originated with an English mathematician named Craig who published a book in 1699, entitled *Theologiæ Christianæ Principia Mathematica*, in which he endeavored to prove that the world would come to an end when belief in Christianity ceased. He argued that with the passage of time the historical evidences of Christianity would become dimmer and dimmer, and finally when these were reduced to zero all earthly things would cease to be.<sup>1</sup> An absurdity like this requires no answer. Even the general scepticism of the eighteenth century is no longer in vogue. The contentions of the present day do not throw doubt upon all history, but only upon particular statements, or the quarrel affects the value of the matter when proved, yet the mere recollection of Craig's theory gives opportunity to formulate our notions of the nature of the science with which we have to deal.

History, in the first place, is not an experimental, but a reasoning science only. All natural sciences of course require the use of the reasoning faculties, but they are applied to different materials. When two chemicals are placed in a test-tube one may

History a  
Reasoning  
Science. x

<sup>1</sup> G. C. Lewis. *Method*, Ch. 7, 15.

observe them fume, unite, change color, and both lose their identity. The problem is to find the nature of the new substance thus formed, and the experiment may be repeated as often as it may be necessary to observe the law of change. Upon the historical page one does not find the action itself, but somebody's description of it. The event has taken place and cannot be repeated for observation, consequently the first problem is to find out what made your predecessor think he was stating the truth, or by what process he arrived at the given view of the events. This is done by reasoning from one point to another till you have arrived at his position and can see what relation the writer held to other known truths and probabilities. The whole aim of historical criticism is to find out what made the witness state the case as he did. It is not a mere matter of addition and subtraction, but a reasoning process dealing with psychological phenomena. Hence all this examination into the mental and moral character of the writer; how his mind has been prepared by heredity and education; what were the conditions of the moral atmosphere during his period, through which the image on his mind might be modified or distorted. It is a procedure by which a reflected image is traced back as near as possible to the first surface on which it was cast.

We seek for more than one reporter of an event, not to fortify our judgment by the presence of mere numbers of witnesses, but in order to see if the event made the same impression upon all as upon the one. If the same image appears in two or three



minds we have considerable assurance that there must have been an event of the kind to make an impression. In the case where equally competent witnesses give conflicting testimony it is again a psychological problem to find the reasoning of each. Conflicting reports may be simply two views of the same thing, and from the sum total of all the evidence we may obtain a composite picture of the persons or events described. If a picture is not visible, it is equally important to prove that no such event occurred.

After all is said and done, we have assurance <sup>Established</sup> that there exists a body of certain information which <sup>Facts.</sup> we may call history. This confidence rests upon the reasoning powers with which man is endowed. A problem in logic once solved in the days of Aristotle is just as much solved today as it was then. A piece of good reasoning stands firm because to repeat it is to show it to be true. The human mind is as capable as ever of adding two and two, and it is likely to remain so as long as the race exists. Consequently, when we examine the great body of matter which offers itself as history we find within it a long connected thread, or a framework, if you please, perhaps not altogether connected, which agrees with the laws of logic and common sense. As in other sciences, many details may in time be changed or pruned away, but a body of main facts will remain, and in the light of human reason it does not appear that these are to be lost.

This is not the place to give an outline of the <sup>Axioms.</sup> proved history of the world. That part which is

assured and that which is still uncertain should be revealed in the study of the authorities on the various periods. On the other hand one may contemplate with profit the kinds of argument which have led to the acceptance of historical facts. For example, there have been formulated certain postulates in historical criticism which may take rank as axioms. These are in part logical conclusions in psychology and in part the accumulated evidence of observation in the moral history of the race. These axioms do not form a connected system, but are more or less isolated truths upon which others may be based. All of them have been touched upon in one way or another in the preceding pages, but it may serve a useful purpose to mass them in a single fundamental group.<sup>1</sup>

The first axiom is so well hedged about with conditions that the logic of it cannot well be escaped, yet evidence is continually presented which fulfills the stipulated requirements.

1. When two or more contemporary witnesses independently of each other report the same event with numerous similar details, which details do not stand in any necessary or common relationship to the event, but have only an accidental connection with it, then the reports which thus agree, in so far as they do agree, must be true, provided the facts, together with the aforesaid details, are so clear that no misunderstanding is possible.

2. Every people gives to its dwelling places, its

<sup>1</sup>Rhomberg, *Die Erhebung der Geschichte zum Rang einer Wissenschaft*, p. 21 et seq.

family institutions, its implements, and its acts, names belonging to its own mother-tongue. So, out of the national character of the prevailing names of each nation one must draw conclusions as to the origin of these names and institutions.

3. It is impossible for any one to conceal completely the time in which he lives, or his own views and circumstances of life.

4. The intellectual development of mankind is subject to the law of gradual progression.

5. For whatever thing a people has a traditional word or name, that thing is known and used by that people. Where it has no word or name for an object, that people does not know or use that object.

The foregoing are classified as intellectual axioms. The second and fifth are the positive and negative sides of the arguments used in questions of linguistic palæontology, and have played a great part in the history of primitive or prehistoric peoples. The origin and migration of Indo-European institutions, for example, have hung upon these principles which are psychological in their nature. The third position is an axiomatic statement of an experience which we have already encountered in studying the personality of authors. It is an assurance that the quality of evidence is bound to appear if we study it closely enough.

The following are classified as moral axioms:

6. A self-discrediting or self-incriminating admission on the part of a partisan but well-informed writer makes the admitted and discrediting fact certain in so far as there is no misapprehension

Moral Axioms.

about it. This is particularly true when the traditions of its own defeats are preserved in the annals of a nation, but the application of the axiom requires great care where personal or private matters are concerned. Self-depreciation, as we have seen elsewhere, may be a conventionality, and confessions are taken with caution even in courts of law. Within a limited scope, however, this is a sound moral argument.

Argument  
from Silence.

7. The silence of all well-instructed contemporaries concerning an event which, if it were true, would have been generally known and, in the main, rightly understood, is a proof that the account is only an invention, in so far as it cannot be assumed that the aforesaid writers have not purposely agreed to keep silence. The caution with which the *argumentum ex silentio* is to be used has been sufficiently dwelt upon. In modern newspaper life it may sometimes be found that silence is agreed upon, but ordinarily when the very difficult exceptions to the rule of silence have been overcome the absence of contemporary mention is a solid foundation for unbelief.

8. Mankind is subject to the law of gradual progression in the adoption or disuse of habits, manners, and customs.

Taken with the fourth axiom respecting intellectual development this postulate accounts for the long existence of religious beliefs, the survival of heathen worship in primitive Christianity, and the tenacity of superstitious practices everywhere. The processes of agriculture are extremely persistent,

even when knowledge has advanced. Examples of long-lived institutions abound on every hand. The usefulness of the axiom lies in the fact that we may count on the persistence of custom into uncertain periods where concrete evidence fails, and may reckon upon only slight modifications when brief lapses of time are left without positive records.

9. A people is not at all likely to attempt without reason to deceive posterity concerning its history. This would presuppose concerted action in a way that has never yet been found, and goes against general experience, which indicates that people as a whole desire the truth to prevail.

In this connection a few more general considerations as to the nature of historical evidence will be in point, and first of all is the comparison with courts of law. We justly look upon the higher tribunals of civilized countries as the most successful instruments yet found among men for ascertaining truth and dispensing equity between citizens and governments. A highly refined system of rules of procedure has been developed in the course of centuries, growing out of the endeavor to secure justice for all parties. In order that no possible injustice may be done to an accused person, and in order that the trial may not be too greatly prolonged, certain classes of evidence are debarred from consideration. Juries are instructed that any shadow of doubt must weigh in favor of the accused, and although they may be morally certain of the guilt of the defendant they must be guided only by the evidence which the rules admit. Courts have only two

Legal Evi-  
dence.

interesting field for the exercise of constructive historical interpretation. The period of its life history is so remote from the present that the student can approach the subject with entire detachment. In fact, the inquirer must recreate the very atmosphere which inspired this form of art, and he runs considerable risk in the attempt. Unlike the architecture of antiquity, the mediæval churches have survived abundantly in their entirety and the subject matter of study comes down almost unimpaired. Moreover, the architectural forms are beautiful in themselves and reward the most exhaustive attention. The inquiry extends into infinite ramifications throughout the social web. The religious motives, the extent of participation, the long periods of building, the methods of the building trades, the seeming affectionate care in decoration, and innumerable other questions find answers in part and suggest further interesting speculation. It is a study of intellectual as well as religious expression, because the Gothic cathedral is an engineering feat of constantly expanding proportions and a task which in its time monopolized the attention of the public.

Control of the  
Imagination.

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tion is based on sound reasoning, not upon fantasy.

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courses open to them. They must decide either for or against an accusation or question in controversy, and they must decide at once, or the ends of justice will be defeated.

Historical Evidence.

The historian, on the other hand, is not obliged to decide at once, consequently he is not bound by the technical rules which serve to shorten the procedure. He may find a third explanation. He may suspend judgment while awaiting other testimony. No prisoner at the bar nor impatient jurymen demand an immediate decision. The jury takes the short cut, the historian takes his time. He may consider circumstantial evidence which it would be dangerous to submit to the ordinary jury. The moral certainty of motives and events is often quite as clear to one who understands the movements of the human mind as it is when backed by the testimony of witnesses. Moreover, the historian may state the doubts and probabilities of the question where juries must be squarely for or against. In short, where courts are guided by rules which adjust themselves to the pressing needs of society, historians are guided by the larger principles which lie behind those rules.<sup>1</sup>

This does not mean that the historian may make free with the rules of good reasoning where the jurymen may not, for, after the hindrances of technicality just mentioned are put aside, there are many limitations and cautions to be observed. The scrutiny of the documents, primary and secondary, is no less rigid than that employed in a court

<sup>1</sup> Lewis, *Method*, I, 196. Seignobos, *Revue Philosophique* XXIV, 175.



of law. Nor may the historian make deductions from moral experience based only on his personal observations of mankind. He must be governed by the evidence of all men in all ages.<sup>1</sup>

Reasoning by comparison, or analogy, is surrounded by pitfalls which the historian must avoid. In the absence of direct information analogies are constantly offering their services, and to the imaginative student they are extremely attractive. Because events once followed a certain course, one is strongly tempted to conclude that they did so on the occasion under consideration; or if a thing is true of one time or place, it is of another. It has already been seen how conclusions from relics of different regions may be unsound because the analogies are incomplete. Writers on institutions seem particularly liable to error from this cause. Thus, von Maurer built up his theory of the village community and the origin of city government by reasoning backward from apparent agricultural analogies which on later examination do not hold. Because the three-field system of cultivation was found in operation early in the middle ages, writers have said that it was continuous from the time of Tacitus. With Sir Henry Maine and others the modern Russian community land ownership has played a prominent rôle in the determination of the mediæval village community. The analogy fails because the conditions are so dissimilar that the example must serve at best as a suggestion for inquiry.

Mr. Freeman, in his zeal for the continuity of his- Survivals.

<sup>1</sup> J. C. Roger, *Summary of Moral Evidence*, p. 8.

tory, saw in the Swiss Landsgemeinde which he attended the analogy of the popular assembly of Tacitus, but he overlooked the fact that for more than a thousand years this popular assembly disappeared and must have come to life again. The Landsgemeinde grew up in a feudal atmosphere and the first mention of it dates from the year 1294. Moreover, when one comes to examine it as it was then, and as it is now, it is not much like the assembly of Tacitus after all. We are often told that the ancient Germanic community of land and local self-government found their way in a direct line of succession from the forests of Germany to the rock-ribbed shores of New England. The land system of Plymouth Colony does indeed offer a most convenient map with which one may clarify the descriptions in Tacitus, but it does not necessarily follow because these institutions came over to England with the Anglo-Saxons that they remained till opportunity arrived to cross the Atlantic. There is a possible continuity, but it looks as if popular government came nearly to a halt under the Tudor and Stuart dynasties, and it may be that the local institutions which the Pilgrims and Puritans carried to New England were born of the democratic self-government in the Puritan church.

**Danger in  
Analogies.**

Political history is open to similar dangers from the use of analogy. The motives of statesmen or the causes of revolutions cannot be lightly tossed from one point to another. Mr. James Bryce says that one of the chief uses of historical studies is to prevent one from being taken in by historical

analogies. Put into the cold formula of philosophy, we are warned that the chief uses of analogy are to direct the observation to a particular fact which appears to resemble some other fact, and if the resemblance is perfect to inquire whether a property in one should not be found in the other.<sup>1</sup>

One temptation incident to the analogy habit is **Logic.** to supply facts which would be present if the comparison were complete. This is one of the troubles which honest logic may bring about if the investigator is not on guard. Guizot says: "Nothing falsifies history more than logic; when the human mind lights upon an idea, it draws from it all the possible consequences, makes it produce everything which it is able to produce, and then presents it in history with all this cortège. Things do not happen in this way; events are not so prompt in their deductions as the human mind."<sup>2</sup>

This is, of course, a logic with the bits in its teeth, **Abstract Terms.** for we have seen often enough the necessity of an orderly logical sense in the interpretation of historical material. A runaway logic does not stop to see if the particulars are actually present, or if the details of the analogy are perfect. Thus there is danger in reasoning from abstract terms. A picture of an institution may be contained in a single word. "People," "sovereignty," "kingship," "legislature," for examples, are concentrated words, each of which contains a vast complex of detail. In the middle ages they meant one thing, and in the

<sup>1</sup> J. C. Roger, *Summary of Moral Evidence*, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Civilization in Europe*, Leçon 5.

eighteenth century something very different. To use these words without discriminations of time and place is to make false analogies, and to commit a sin of carelessness against which all the critics cry aloud. Although writers might presuppose some little discrimination on the part of readers, it will not do to leave much undefined. Even the passing allusion is an abbreviated analogy for which the historian should hold himself strictly accountable.

Yet there is a reasoning from small things in history which calls for the highest gifts of the imagination and the keenest application of logic. As it is given to the zoologist to reconstruct a fossil animal from a single fragment of a bone, so the historian is called upon at times to build a racial habit from a relic, or an institution from a fragment of a law. No more exquisite pleasure can be found than is in the use of the trained imagination in the reproduction of a phase of life from the accidental remnants of the past. Herein lies the usefulness as well as the intellectual reward of the investigator

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE CONSTRUCTIVE PROCESS

UP to this point these pages have been dealing with fragments of history, proving the quality and interpreting the value of materials at hand. The constructive process has, indeed, already begun, for in the interpretation of a document its connection with others almost necessarily comes to view. The position has now been reached where the larger conception of the whole field is required. After diligent search the investigator finds at his disposal a quantity of data, gathered, perhaps, from widely scattered sources. These materials are possibly self-explanatory. Wherever not clear, or where positive information fails, the reason and the scientific imagination are called upon to bridge the gaps and establish the connections. It is not only necessary to piece together the documentary evidence, but, if one is to obtain the full conception of a period, there must be taken into consideration a body of general conditions which have had influence in moulding society and in directing the current of its history. The natural configuration of the country in which the scene is laid; the state of social opinion governing the actions of men; the psychological conditions guiding individuals and masses; all these

must be weighed in searching for the larger estimate of the epoch or country chosen.

Combination  
of Previous  
Labors.

These factors have all been taken up earlier in these chapters, but were employed in a different way. In the criticism of sources it was necessary to study social conditions or peculiarities of place and period, in order to find out why the author or document received and reflected the stated impressions of events or situations. On the other hand, in forming historical conceptions of an age or period one must study the influence of the same elements, in a larger way perhaps, in order to see why the people or events gave such an impression, or what caused them to act in a certain manner at that epoch. This is the reconstruction of the past with the aid of both documents and reason. The investigator puts himself in the place of the original observers, but with this advantage, that he often has command of more materials than any one of them, and, furthermore, that he stands outside of the limitations of their age.

Divisions of  
History.

The fundamental process remains the same, whatever may be the form or portion of history taken as a task, notwithstanding the fact that the number and character of the materials may differ in each case. Historical construction may follow the order of time and place, or it may be made according to theme. The first is the ordinary narrative history in consecutive periods, taking either one country or another, or attempting to treat them synchronologically. When presented according to theme the result is constitutional history, legal history,

economic history, the history of art, of religion, and other selected social phenomena. In all cases the general considerations above mentioned, the natural situation, the social and intellectual atmosphere, and all the rest must also be weighed if we wish to get a proper estimate of the development of the chosen topic.

It is in the study of causation that one of the differences between the earlier and the modern method of historical research most conspicuously appears. Formerly it was the fashion to assign great events and great social changes to trifling causes, and the more insignificant the cause the more acute appeared the penetration of the historian.<sup>1</sup> The rebuilding of Jerusalem was attributed to a dream of Darius, king of Persia, in which he was commanded to do this thing. A flock of geese on the Capitoline hill in Rome heard a noise outside the city walls and proceeded to make a great noise themselves. The garrison awoke to find the enemy at their doors, the attack was repulsed, Rome was saved, it grew to be a great city, and the world was thus profoundly moved by the cackling of a fowl. Cleopatra, in the midst of a brilliant career, ended her life with the bite of an asp. Thus Rome through a trifling cause, an insignificant reptile, was left unhindered in the development of its colossal power. The Greeks of Greece contended for generations with their brethren of Asia Minor over the possession of Troy. The cause of the Trojan war was said to have been

Trivial Causation.

<sup>1</sup> This theme is worked out in great detail by Mougeolle, *Problèmes de l'Histoire*.

a quarrel over a woman, the beautiful Helen of Troy. This was the judgment of the poets, both Homer and Virgil, but it was equally accepted as a cause by Herodotus and by Montaigne, the modern historian and philosopher.

Voltaire makes the Reformation depend on the fact that Pope Leo X, in his desire to raise funds for a proposed war against the Turks, proclaimed an issue of indulgences and gave the monopoly of the sale of these pardons to the Augustinian monks. This privilege was later taken away from that order and given to the Dominicans. Hence there was a quarrel, hence the protests of the Augustinian brother Luther, hence the Reformation. Says Voltaire, "this little affair of the monks in one corner of Saxony produced more than a hundred years of discord, of rage and misfortune in thirty nations."<sup>1</sup>

Thus intrigues of women and other small things were made to settle the destinies of government and societies. But this essentially literary method of producing historical effect met with protest even in the eighteenth century. Montesquieu, and after him Rousseau broke away from these notions and started to find substantial reasons for social and political phenomena, so that in the wake of an increasing volume of objection rhetorical guessing of this kind has now disappeared from serious history.

Physical Environment.

At the same time the study of physical phenomena in relation to history is an inquiry not altogether of modern origin. As early as the sixteenth century Jean Bodin in his writings on political theory

<sup>1</sup> *Essais sur les Moeurs*, 54, 127.



recognized the influence of climate on the human race. His conclusions as to the effects were overdrawn, not to say bizarre in some cases, but a beginning was made for the consideration of the natural environment of man and societies. From that time onward increasing weight has been given to economic conditions, until at present some are inclined to insist that the physical factors determine all the movements of history. However, it is not necessary to adopt a purely materialistic attitude in order to be convinced that economic facts have been most powerful agents even in the political history of nations. This view is ordinarily accepted as a matter of course, and it then becomes simply a question as to how much weight should be attached to natural phenomena. Schools of writers divide on this point, and the separation usually begins with the primary definitions of history. Without attempting to settle the matter, one may concede that it is both a legitimate and a valuable work to study the purely economic development of a people or community. One may also classify the natural factors which produce sociological laws without subscribing to a sociological definition of history. At the same time it remains ever the duty of the investigator to inquire with care whether one or many of the elements in the natural environment have not directed the course of his chosen political and social events. For that reason it is desirable briefly to classify these factors.

The most conspicuous feature in the natural Climate. conditions are climate and physical geography.

Whether the country is mountainous or flat, whether the climate is torrid or cold, are questions which at once arise, but the fundamental query after all is not how these indicate the geological history of the globe, but how they affect the business of getting a living. The science of geology eventually becomes of the greatest importance to mankind, but for history the question is how far man has mastered it, not what the real science is. Whether society has overcome, or is still subject to, the elements in the business of life is a matter of vital importance. The limitations of the polar Eskimo and the inertia of the equatorial Brazilian are two extreme examples of the effects of climate, but all the way between lie illustrations of the reflex influences of the effort-cost of living upon society and civilization. It is one of the commonplaces of modern history that the difficulties of the temperate zones, such as the necessity of clothing and provision against cold seasons, have brought to pass the inventions of man and the development of his higher life. The topic, however, admits of closer analysis and more detailed application, so that one may be justified in giving it further attention here.

Classification  
of Geographi-  
cal Data.

An eminent anthropologist<sup>1</sup> has classified the geographical phenomena which affect society into two great groups, according as they influence man involuntarily, or affect the operations of the will. The first are either physiological or psychological. Adaptations of the body to warm climate, for example, take place in races after long residence in

<sup>1</sup> Ratzel, *Anthropogeographie*.

the tropics and mark the difference between them and the new-comer. Grand scenery has an effect on the imagination and may have an important influence on views of life and conduct. Primitive peoples are often moved by fear of a great natural phenomenon, and the effect can be seen in their religious conceptions. The impression of beauty appears to be reserved for more cultivated ages. A taste for mountain scenery is a modern acquirement, and even now the peasant who lives in the midst of it does not usually appreciate the æsthetic side of his surroundings. The mountains are likely to develop character through the other class of influences, namely, those which affect the operations of the will, cultivating fortitude in danger, or powers of endurance.

The great natural facts in the configuration of the earth sometimes call forth and direct the energies of man, and again they fix limits to his exertions. The Mediterranean sea and the ocean tempted the curiosity of those who dwelt on their borders and by degrees the coasts of other lands were found and explored. Out of this has grown the commerce of the world. On the other hand, high mountains have had a dividing influence upon the intercourse of peoples. A mountain range has never been a completely prohibitive barrier, because some way across it has usually been found even in primitive times; nevertheless it sets a limit to the amount of travel or traffic, and the results may be clearly seen. The numerous dialects of German Switzerland were doubtless fostered by the difficulties of intercourse

Effect on  
Energy of  
Man.

between the valleys of that country. The political independence of the city states of Greece was not caused primarily by the mountains and bays which panelled the peninsula, but the tendency to segregation was assisted by the natural hindrances to communication. In the same way the history of the Spanish peninsula has been affected by the elevated chains which divide the country in various directions.

Effect on  
Character.

In a still narrower sense the climate and geography of a region may affect individuals and communities. The climates which require clothing have fostered ingenuity in supplying that want, so that the development of the textile industries and manufactures of household conveniences are based on the change of seasons. It is here that we may classify the effects of natural phenomena on the human mind, the sharpening of perceptions, and the enrichment of human knowledge. Here enters also the development of personal character under the discipline of nature. The mountaineer meets difficulties daily and overcomes them by habit without a thought. The frontier woodsman of Canada is accustomed to long journeys by land and water. He starts unaided in his canoe, carries his transportation on his own shoulders between streams, and covers distance with a rapidity and ease incredible to the dweller in towns. Everywhere the historian must reckon with environment in estimating the condition of the class.

Geography  
and Political  
History.

Continuing the study of surface geography one might find numerous lines of connection between physical conditions and political history. Towns rise along the shores of navigable streams because

of the ease with which commerce follows those channels. Cities also are built on high places for security against attack. Perugia has occupied an isolated hilltop ever since the age of the Etruscans. Multitudes of "burgs" indicate by name and situation the cause of their location. Ancient Praeneste exercised hegemony over a group of little towns which occupied the ends of a series of ridges radiating like fingers from the base of the mother city. The political utilities of these natural situations are clear and interesting, but no law can be deduced from them as to the places where towns must inevitably have been founded. Each case must be taken by itself. The actual reason for the foundation of many cities can be traced either in documents or by inference from the situation. The explanation of the particular case is usually sufficient for the purpose of the historian. The advent of peaceful times may divert the course of commerce from the hill-town, or the discovery of a new route may leave a once favored seaport to decay. The relation of topography to history in such a place must be taken up with each period or each episode. Commercial routes as a rule will follow lines of least resistance, but this also is a comparative statement. More and more difficulties have been overcome as the world has advanced. Roads have been made over mountains and finally tunnels bored through them, so that we reach a time when a topic of research might well be named "the modifications of geography at the hands of man." Yet the cost of these changes must be reckoned with, for ship canals and mountain

Location of  
Cities.

railways are not built with ease, and the storing up of the capital and the running expenses of such enterprises form a constant drain upon the industrial power of society.

Geography not  
a Dominating  
Factor.

Political changes may affect the commerce of whole regions. The routes by which the luxuries of the Orient came to Southern Europe were once across Asia Minor or through the Red Sea. The use of these channels has depended upon the peoples who held control. The Roman Empire with its widespread protection opened doors which the Moham-medans endeavored to close. The Christian crusaders forced open certain routes again, but the centers of trade were moved westward from Constantinople to Venice and Genoa. With the close of the middle ages the Turks gained possession of Constantinople and the ancient routes were cut off from the Mediterranean. Not only was Asia Minor deprived of the local benefits of this commerce, but a land replete with natural riches was left to waste for ages under a corrupt and tyrannical form of government. Geography, therefore, has no compelling factors which control completely the actions of mankind. At most it is a modification of his conduct. Attractions in one direction, control of nature in others, have been concurrent influences in building up civilization.

Frontiers.

Various political theories have at times been current as to the national rights conferred by the geographical features of a country. So-called "natural frontiers" have given cause to ambition for expansion and even war. The French nation held

for a long time, and many may still hold, that the natural boundaries of that country are the Pyrenees, the Alps, and the Rhine. The English in India have contended for particular lines as the proper frontier against Russia, but there are no inherent rights in a geographical situation. One might think that Spain was naturally endowed with all of the territory on the peninsula up to the Pyrenees, but the solidarity of a nation depends on other things. Language is a more cohesive factor than geography, but even here there is no law. Switzerland has three official languages and no demand for separation. Canada has a French population which is as loyal to the Empire as the part which speaks English. Austria, on the other hand, is a collection of tongues which do not readily harmonize but render political unity extremely difficult. So, although language is a strong bond of affinity there is no historical experience which would show that all who speak alike would act together in political sympathy.

It is true that certain configurations of the land are more easily defended than others. A mountain chain is conspicuously capable of being made a national bulwark and for such boundaries the nations have eagerly contended. A river, on the other hand, is more convenient for communication than defence and is not a permanent dividing line, except in primitive ages. In modern warfare a river is but a temporary strategic hindrance. Historically, however, the student must take account of the national ambition for the convenient boundary. However ill-

Natural  
Boundaries.

founded the claim may be, it explains at certain times the political action of a nation, although the desire may no longer exist.

**Topography.** Topography is highly important in the conduct and study of warfare. The science of military strategy is based upon an exhaustive knowledge of the configuration of the countries likely to be involved. The histories of battles are full of instances where the nature of the ground has been the decisive factor in a great conflict. Swamps have baffled cavalry, or a downward slope has given impetus to victory, and so on through the list of situations, yet on closer analysis it will be found that it is not nature which overwhelms the conquered. It is not so much the influence of the physical features of the earth in contention with man as it is man's lack of information about the situation. Mountains, and even oceans, offer no insuperable obstacles to war, only temporary hindrances; and it is often found, as it was in the Franco-Prussian contest, that one side is better informed about the enemy's country than the enemy itself. The first to seize a natural advantage will be likely to win, but this is a contest of brains, not a war with the elements.

**Geology.** History and civilization have been profoundly affected by the geological conditions of the earth. As already indicated, the nature of the soil, the conditions of productivity, the presence of useful minerals, and the facility with which all of these may be utilized, are data which are of great importance, not only in the study of economic theory, but



also in establishing the causes of political movements and general national development. The time is past when it might be necessary to urge attention to economic conditions, for modern scientific research is fully alive to the importance of the subject. It is no longer confined to a few striking examples, like the agrarian wars of Rome, or the peasant revolts in England. Common everyday political life is found to be influenced by economic reasons. One of the most important duties of ambassadors nowadays is to negotiate treaties regulating the exchange of products between countries. In the minds of a certain part of the population the chief object of a navy is to provide new outlets for merchandise, on the theory that "commerce follows the flag." Writers have gone so far as to insist that everything is moved by economic causes. To them such a cataclysm as the Reformation was caused by the protest of Germany against economic exploitation by the papacy. This goes too far, for, although this factor enters into the matter, the purely economic theory fails to take account of motives which are extremely powerful. Religious sentiments, even when vitiated with material interests, are distinct, and must be reckoned with as separate psychic phenomena.

The economic occupations of a people or region have much to do with their political and social aspirations. The rock-bound coasts of New England, the rolling farms of New York, the coal and iron hills of Pennsylvania, and the expansive prairies of the West have successively influenced the course

Effect of Economic Occupations.

of American institutions. The rugged mountains of Norway afforded scant existence for an increasing population and so the Scandinavians were driven to look to the sea for their living. This developed not only a rugged race, but a particular form of family organization which perpetuated the independence of the individual and fostered the spirit of adventure which led the Northmen to the conquest of France, England, Sicily, and even more remote parts of the world. The primitive peoples on the steppes of Asia depended on their cattle for their sustenance. Their habitations were movable tents which could easily be changed to fresh pastures. When numbers increased it was only necessary to add more cattle and more tents. The families of sons and grandsons clustered about the original tent, and by the most natural process imaginable there grew up the clan and the patriarchal form of government.

**American  
Migrations.**

Even more particular analysis can be made in civilized countries. For example, the course of migration in the Mississippi Valley has been carefully traced along the different soils and forests. The hardwood and black soil regions had attractions for a certain class from other states, while the prairies were taken up by emigrators from another parallel. The social situation in turn was determined by the origin of the inhabitants. Changes have also taken place in the political attitude of the southern states, owing to economic development. Formerly the principal product in that region was cotton, and, consequently, the growers demanded

easy trade relations with foreign countries with low tariff on imports. Since the Civil War the coal and iron industries have been developed and a strong sentiment for protection has made itself felt.

This class of phenomena belongs to what the late Thorold Rogers called the "economic interpretation of history." He drew attention very properly to matters which had not then received adequate consideration, citing among other factors the place of wool in English politics and in the life of the fourteenth century. In the preparations for Edward's war upon France heavy restrictions on the export of wool were enacted for the purpose of forcing the Flemings to take sides with the English. We have here a unique case where an export duty was actually paid by the foreign consumer, but the Flemings were absolutely dependent on the one source for wool and their political allegiance was bound up with their industrial welfare. From another point of view it is apparent that England itself was in a fairly good state of internal peace to permit the sheep industry thus to flourish.

Economic Interpretation of History.

Other illustrations might be drawn to show how the investigator is compelled to consider many sides of the social situation in order to explain any one of them. Out of these data certain economic laws have been formulated and it is wise for the student of history to be acquainted with them. Peoples and communities have always lived according to some economic theory, although they may never have taken the trouble to formulate it for themselves. The latest and most scientific doctrine may not be

the principle of action followed at the period under consideration, but the modern theory may explain the consequences. At the same time, as in other instances already brought forward, great care should be used in applying a hard and fast rule. Circumstances must be alike in all cases to establish a law, or to prove that one episode is like a previous example. History does not repeat itself in that convenient fashion, but rather exhibits itself in infinite variations. As a commentary, however, on political and social situations the economic factors cannot be left out of consideration.

**Economic  
History.**

The study of purely economic history naturally calls for a different use of these facts from the application of the same phenomena in the explanation of political history. For the first the investigator would estimate not only the natural situation, but would take note also of any legislative regulation of economic forces. Laws prohibiting exportation, or taxing imports, or sumptuary decrees requiring the use of certain goods have all been used at various times, and show that if he so desires man can direct or influence economic evolution. The effect of the combination of man and nature in the development of wealth is economic history. The same sources of information; however, are important to the student of political or national history at large. The methods of the investigating economists are, therefore, to be recommended for valuable suggestion.

## NOTE.

A good example is the questionnaire used by the social economists of the school of Leplay for investigating the condition of the working classes. This is the so-called "budget of the family" and includes not only an inquiry into the income and expenditures of the household, but all the conditions under which the family lives. The questions suggest matters which may be of importance to more general historical research. The special definition of "place" or geographical situation is interesting in view of what has already been said.

*Conditions Surrounding the Family.*

1. Condition of the soil, of industry and of population.
2. Civil status of the family.
3. Religion and moral habits.
4. Hygiene and sanitary conditions.
5. Rank of the family.
6. Means of existence of the Family.
  - a. Amount of property. (Furniture and clothing not included.)
  - b. Subventions.
  - c. Labors and industries.
7. Methods of existence of the family.
  - a. Kinds of foods and meals.
  - b. Dwelling, furniture and clothing.
  - c. Recreation.
8. History of the family.
  - a. The principal phases in its existence.
  - b. The customs and institutions assuring the physical and moral well-being of the family.

*Definition of Place (Le lieu).*

- I. Soil and waters.
  - a. Geographical situation of the family and of the space investigated.
  - b. Relief and contour of the soil or landscape.
  - c. The soil. (With a view to productivity.)
  - d. Waters.
- II. Subsoil. (Geology of the place.)
- III. Air. (Facts of Meteorology.)
  - a. Seasons.
  - b. Local peculiarities or atmospheric accidents.

In the volumes of the journal "La Science Sociale," Paris, will be found numerous instructive studies in economic and social history applied to ancient and modern. The results are by no means definitive, but the form of inquiry is extremely suggestive and the analytical tables of contents found in the later volumes are very helpful.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN HISTORY

SOMETHING has already been said as to the influence of the mental atmosphere upon authors in writing history at given periods. The middle ages were cited to show the effect of philosophical ideals and popular conceptions upon the capacity for exactitude. Modern times might be quoted to indicate an opposite tendency, for scientific truth is so much in demand that one does not dare to be careless. But there is another side to the psychological element in history. This is the use of the scientific knowledge of mental processes in explanation of the historical movements themselves. An understanding of the usual operations of the mind under given conditions will help to show the causes of both individual actions and popular movements. This information must be sought at the hands of the experts, with the warning that no so-called law can be applied to a particular historical case until all circumstances are found identical. Logic, as has been seen in other places, may be a trap for the unwary, yet when looking for the motives of a complex situation the scientific psychological rule may suggest the explanation.

The Individual and the Mass.

This is not the place to insert a treatise on social psychology, however brief, yet two phases of the matter call for a moment of attention. On the one

hand appear the mental processes of the individual, on the other the tendencies of the mass. Both move by the same general laws, but the psychological movements of the crowd are intensified by the very fact that it is a crowd. The result is not only the sum of the individual actions, but this may be multiplied many times by the reaction of the individuals upon each other. The study of these phenomena constitutes social psychology, a science by no means complete, but offering many valuable results. At the foundation lies the fact that man is an imitative creature and is subject to suggestion, conscious or unconscious, from his fellowman, and certain laws which control this imitative process have already been well established.

The mob is the extreme example of social excitability, where the mass, held together by mutual suggestion, will commit acts from which the same individuals when alone would shrink with horror. It is the imitative impulse seen in the flock of sheep which follow the first leader through the fence, or in a panic of fear will even hurl themselves over a precipice. In less degree the well-mannered crowd will be moved to concerted action in religion or politics through the contagion of example. These laws of imitation help to account for crusades, speculative crazes like the South Sea bubble, religious revivals, financial panics, movements for political reform, and similar phenomena, good or evil, in every age of the world. In saying this one does not have to deny the influence of ideas. It is simply the explanation of the method by which

ideas take hold and spread among masses of mankind. The leaders of men, the propagators of ideas, take advantage of these laws instinctively.

Social Condi-  
tions.

Less striking but fully as powerful are the effects of custom and conventionality upon the mass of mankind. The desire to appear well in the eyes of their fellows is a fundamental motive in all classes of the human race. In fashions this approval is obtained by imitating superiors in wealth or position. The ideal person or rank to be imitated changes with the period, but the motive is active in all ages. In morals the approval of our fellow-beings is sought through obedience to the conventionalities which prevail in that particular social group. When the ideals are good the influence of conventionality is excellent, for the support of example is almost indispensable to the preservation of good habits.

cf. Veblen

Social opinion on the other hand may have upheld manners and moral precepts which cannot now be defended. For instance, the practice of exposing deformed children was an accepted custom in Greek life at a time when the fine arts were showing their highest development. Stoicism under all conditions of life was as much a fashion as it was a philosophical doctrine in its day. Duelling persisted as a code of honor more by the power of social opinion than through inherent principle. As a means of settling questions of right or veracity the personal encounter has no sense whatever, yet a century has hardly elapsed since it was impossible for a gentleman to avoid the consequences of the fashion. The belief in witchcraft persisted into the eighteenth century



with such power that even the judiciary were clearly controlled by it in their estimates of evidence. Testimony showing in itself that the accused was sane and harmless was made to prove the contrary, because the judges could not rid themselves of the belief that witchcraft itself was a real thing. They were only a part of the public opinion of the time.

Instances might be multiplied indefinitely to show the influence of social opinion, not only upon manners and institutions, but upon political history as well. Prejudices of nationality and language affect international relations and aggravate real causes of irritation. These are largely matters of ignorance and misinformation, but their persistence and evil influences are due to the contagion of public opinion. The spread of quiet beliefs as well as of the wild rumors of invasion or panic are both subject to the laws of psychology. These must share the investigator's attention in every period he enters. At the same time the question as to what public opinion was at a given date is not an easy matter to decide. In modern political affairs the chief guide is the record of votes on party questions, but if one searches for statistical information as to how many persons actually believed in the tenets of a platform it is impossible to come anywhere near exactitude. The newspapers which urge one side or another may be counted, but no one knows how many subscribers or readers are in sympathy with the policy. Pamphlets may be abundant, but no one can count the proselytes to their doctrines, except through the small portion of the public which goes to the polls.

Public Opin-  
ion.

**Imitation.**

Yet the student of history has before him the established psychological fact that a large portion of the mass accepts its opinions from others. The voice of a small but energetic minority of any group may be the only opinion heard on that side, but there is always a great body looking for leaders. If the small body moves the rest, whether by force or by contagion, the results are the action of the whole.

Changes come slowly at best, and the older the group the more difficult is the task of reform. Pioneer societies have a tendency to make innovations because in the process of colonizing they cut themselves off in part from the traditions of their former social environment. In fitting themselves to a new situation they abandon old customs which have outlived their usefulness. There will be no wholesale destruction of old usages, for so persistent are old habits that through the home customs carried into new country the origin of the colony can be traced. Leaving out of consideration the temporary mining camp, where all moral laws are likely to give way, the ordinary colony will abolish only the customs which have become useless, because in the new surroundings their anachronism is manifest.

**The Heritage  
of Culture.**

In the environment of a people there must be taken into account the culture of the past. This includes the social institutions which have grown up and the intellectual acquirements already attained. This is sometimes spoken of as inherited civilization, but strictly speaking there is no such thing as heredity in culture. A child is born with the capacities

of its parents, but must acquire for itself whatever education it attains. Biologically speaking, every generation starts at the bottom, but is immensely influenced by the environment in which it grows up. It absorbs the manners and morals of those about it and progresses according as it makes use of the knowledge of its predecessors. Consequently, as in the case of the inheritance of lands and money, the historian must take account of the use made of opportunities. Charlemagne by dint of great effort forged together the Roman Empire, but his grandsons let it go to pieces. Frederick William of Prussia collected and drilled one of the finest armies in Europe and left this with a full war-chest to his son. Frederic the Great took advantages of his resources, expanded his territory, and made Prussia one of the chief powers of the continent. Other examples of the use of political inheritances come to mind at once, and are necessary considerations in estimating the work of every dynasty and administration. Such cases, however, are simple arithmetic compared to the study of the heritage of a complex civilization.

The eighth century might be supposed to have at command all the learning of the Greeks and Romans, but only a portion of it was used and the world seemed about to lose the rest. We are obliged to inquire what authors were available, what was taught in the schools, and what conveniences of life were drawn from mechanical contrivances. The natural sciences were all born late and their most rapid growth has been in modern times, consequently the more recent centuries offer the more

complex problems. In fact, the consideration of inherited culture is a topic of modern research to which formerly not much thought was given, but it is important to know, for example, how much of the land of France had been cleared for tillage and how many lines of travel were open before the time of Charlemagne. Exact statistics are not available for that period and the question is still open to research, but the query is none the less important. What use did the Anglo-Saxons make of the culture left them by the Romans? Apparently very little, but the question ought to be asked of each generation that has followed. It is necessary occasionally to make a cross section of history to estimate its assets, spiritual and temporal, in order to show what advantages the next generation possessed and how well these were made use of. In so modern a situation as the Franco-Prussian war we cannot account for the military success of a Moltke without a study of the learning and economic progress of Germany during the previous quarter of a century. Not only the art of war, but the sciences in general, were being cultivated as nowhere else. Today the commercial position of Germany is due to the progressive use of all of the acquired technical knowledge of the past generations and of this.

Heritage of  
Art.

In the matter of art we are the heirs of all the ages in a particularly striking way. The inhabitants of Paris, for instance, can see in their public galleries examples of sculpture from the earliest efforts to the present day. There are represented not only the finest paintings of the Renaissance, but more of

## PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN HISTORY 285

them than the Medici could show, along with the best that succeeding centuries have produced. Paris profits by this, and stands as a world center of fine art and industry. Contrast with this the dark period in the history of Rome when the ignorant people, although surrounded with the fragments of ancient art, were unable to appreciate their beauty, or even to read the Greek inscriptions. A seated statue of Menander, although plainly inscribed with his name, was taken for a saint, and one may yet see the worn foot which was nearly kissed away by its worshippers.

The law itself is an inheritance for each generation and may be a hindrance or a help to progress, hence it is important to note who is responsible for the laws of a particular period. The Anglo-Saxons wished only the old and well-established. Alfred is called a lawgiver, but he himself was afraid to change the old customs except in a few cases, which were obviously outgrown. Except in times of frenzy, like the French Revolution, the principles of law are slow to change, even in modern days, in spite of the fact that men now elect law-making bodies. However, the responsibility of later generations for their own government is more evident, and it is the historian's duty to distinguish how much the nation is moved by inherited ordinances and how much of the law is due to the initiative of the living.

A study of the psychologic laws under which each generation comes up removes all argument in favor of "race" as a factor in history. Taine measured civilization according to "race, environment

Law and Progress.

Race not a Factor in History.

and time,"<sup>1</sup> but the most that can be said for the first item is to call it race education. In reality it is group education, with which race has no connection. Men are born innocent of any previous culture of their fathers, but with a variety of capacities and temperaments. By living together the peculiarities of the group became emphasized and conspicuous through the natural laws of social imitation. Religion may sanction and perpetuate certain practices and moral precepts, but blood has nothing to do with the matter. It is the peculiar environment, in which imitation is assisted by parental precept and constant example. The race element has so long been discredited in connection with the history of Western Europe that it might hardly seem necessary to call it to mind,<sup>2</sup> but the question comes up even yet in the study of oriental peoples. Occasionally one hears grave economists assert that the yellow races have not the capacity to compete with the Teutonic. This has been said at times even of the Russo-Slavic, but in the latter case modern events have silenced the argument, and recent wars have shaken the prejudice against the Orient. In any event it is not a matter of blood, but of institutions.

Recapitulation.

To recapitulate the general conditions, let us suppose the case of an investigator who has undertaken the examination of a brief period of the his-

<sup>1</sup> See Introduction to his *History of English Literature*.

<sup>2</sup> "Of all vulgar modes of escaping from the consideration of the effect of social and moral influences on the human mind, the most vulgar is that of attributing the diversities of conduct and character to inherent natural differences." Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, I, 390. Buckle, *Civilization in England*, I, 36-137.

tory of a single country. The larger study of mankind is of course the eventual task of historical research, but practically each worker to be effective must take a small portion, and frequently only one phase of the period chosen. Assuming that the general current of a national epoch is to be given, the worker will from the documents assure himself of the political movements in their chronological or topical order. To give light upon these political currents and to explain the kind of life which this people exemplifies, he will include in his studies:

1. The physical geography of the territory. This will include the configuration, amount of land and water, the climate, the soil and its economic productivity, and the important mineral products.

2. The nature of the people, which may be found in a study of national origin and existing intellectual peculiarities.

3. Culture conditions, which are revealed in the language, the habits, the state of morals, the character of religion, in art, in the extent of commerce, and in the condition of science.

4. The existing political institutions, as seen first in the fundamental constitution, which is either fixed or flexible, and second in the ordinary law, concerning which it is necessary not only to know its words but to observe how carefully it is administered.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE PRESENTATION

THE study of the general causes at work in history is only one part of the collection of data. We are obliged to take account of large matters, possibly casting the eye over long vistas of time to explain a limited period, but the act is yet one of the preliminary processes of construction. We may speculate on the philosophy of human life and the ultimate end of all things, and still be busy with but a single point in the general task. The aim of it all is finally to present a connected account. It is in the nature of our mental operations that the connections between things have been slowly establishing themselves as the preparatory work has proceeded. In attempting to analyze the method we have separated processes which take place simultaneously, because it is best to consider the steps one at a time in order to see their logical value. The crowning act is to get the results of the previous study into an orderly narrative, however long the process may have been approaching completeness.

In brief, a practical statement of the case is this:

1. A topic was chosen for investigation.
2. Many authors and documents have been consulted.
3. These have been criticized and the worthless laid aside.



4. From the pertinent sources hundreds of notes have been taken.

5. Small groups of related facts have been placed in order as the work progressed.

6. A study of general physical, economic and social agencies has enlarged the groups of facts and given greater coherency to the groups.

7. It is now in order to combine the parts into a treatise, or a narrative for the public.

Probably the scheme has been forming in the mind during the progress of the research. A chronological treatment has its order prescribed in advance, and a topical arrangement will develop at least an hypothesis of results, yet in all cases it is important to stop and review the subject as a whole in order to formulate it in proper proportions. In this connection the first general duty may be summed up in the word "concentration." This has a very practical application at the outset, for as a rule the investigator collects more data than he needs. In the laudable desire to omit nothing of importance relating to his subject he will make note of matters which may be finally discarded. This is the method pursued in every science, and there is no other way of making sure of thorough work, but it does not necessarily follow that all of the material should be used. In historical research it is almost inevitably the case that the matter should be "boiled down."

Upon the process of concentration depends the excellence of the product. At the very outset the kind of history about to be written will prescribe the classes of material to be omitted. For constitu-

tional and legal history, for art or religious history, or for biography there will be things omitted which might appear in a general narrative. One might think such an admonition so obvious that it need not be mentioned, but it is a regrettable fact that even the special writer sometimes forgets the boundaries of his own topic. This can arise in the conscientious collection of data in the expectation that the matter will eventually be sifted. To avoid redundancy the point of view must be maintained steadily throughout the whole investigation.

Improper Per-  
spective.

After the subject itself has determined in a general way the kinds of data that are to be set aside, the next consideration is the relative value of what is left. This is frequently spoken of as finding the "historical perspective," and is a matter not only essential to an agreeable literary style, but also to the truth of history. Notwithstanding the importance of this rule, an enormous budget of grievances can be rolled up against the historians on this very point. Again and again the chapters are loaded with details about comparatively unimportant events or persons, or, what is equally perverse of truth, all parts of the period are given equally extensive treatment. The distant and minor personages are brought into the foreground, the picture is flat, and accordingly the narrative is out of perspective. Herodotus often fails in this respect. While he is reciting the story of Greece he happens to think of an anecdote about some other country, and in the telling of it he is perhaps reminded of another, and before he gets back to the current of

his history again the reader may have had a trip to Babylon or Africa. The stories are very entertaining but they do not always contribute to the perspective of Greek history. Another sad example of lack of perspective is in Kopp's "*Geschichte der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft*." The author was so anxious to exhibit the relations of the confederation to the German Empire that he overloaded the narrative with discussions of imperial documents. Switzerland is almost lost sight of and the work would be more appropriately called a history of the empire. Freeman's *Norman Conquest* suffers from the overcrowding of details. The account is so minute that the author appears to have found it hard to omit anything he found in the chronicles. The list of delinquents is long indeed. Almost every doctoral dissertation in history contains much that could profitably be left out.

The true perspective must be sought at any expense of selection and concentration. In the first place it must be remembered that the subject investigated by any one man is but a small part of the history of the world and probably only a portion of any one country. A modest conception of his own contribution will help to reduce the compass of the treatise, and, better yet, will indicate the matters to be retained. Only such evidence as will contribute to an understanding of the general development of the country, or the general history of its institutions, should be included in the presentation. Too many books have been written in which it would seem as if the subject were the only thing in

True Perspective.

the world worth attention. Argument may be necessary to prove a new theory, and all the important facts for that purpose should be included, but here, too, there is likely to be an overestimate of the space required for the demonstration. The literature in each branch of science and in every field of history is so abundant that the new writer is in duty bound, if only for self-preservation, to consider the limits of human acquirement and the brevity of this life.

**Omissions.**

The most successful writers are those who know best what to leave out, yet the process of elimination is not the most agreeable. When one has worked hard to gather his facts, has spent hours and days in getting the substance of a subject, it seems cruel to be obliged to lay aside all those notes and condense the work of weeks into a paragraph, or boil down a page into an adverb. Infanticide is hardly less repugnant, but the weeding must be done and the only question is as to what shall be left standing. For choice we are not left in the dark, or abandoned to the mere desire to be brief. Important guide marks indicate the way. One of these points to the conscientious use of the words and expressions which concentrate in themselves the results of ages or the essence of institutions. These are often words which seem so familiar that no mistake could be made in the meaning, yet a most perilous part of the composition of history lies in the use of the terms which must necessarily be employed in a technical sense to avoid the repetition of long descriptions. Every natural science demands that care be exer-

cised in the formation and application of its own terminology. Just as philosophy and theology require uniformity in terms before discussions can begin, so is it equally important that the words descriptive of institutions and situations be employed with exactitude.

In the historical narrative the use of representative words is constant. We cannot on every occasion stop to give a page of explanation respecting the relation of men to each other and to the land in the middle ages, but, in the midst of a paragraph about something else, or by way of comparison, we use the word "feudalism," and to the intelligent reader a whole picture is there. Hosts of similar words are at command into which are condensed whole paragraphs of law, or whole books of description. We are continually saying "people," "nation," "monarchy," "kingdom," "church and state," "law," "republic," and the careful student knows that the words stand for one kind of institution under the Roman Empire, another kind under Charlemagne, and still another under Kaiser Wilhelm. Yet there is a notorious lack of discrimination in their use. A French king was created in the tenth century whose powers were but the moonlight shadows of those of Louis XIV, and it was many generations after the first king before one could speak with propriety of a "French people." The term "feudal" is frequently applied by way of allusion or comparison to social relations of any period without attention to the fact that feudalism at any one time in the middle ages was a most

Representa-  
tive Terms.

complicated affair, differing in every province and changing with every century. The word "tyrant" has attained an odious meaning which was not attached to it by the Greeks, and the use of it in the modern sense is justifiable in its proper place, but if we apply the term "democracy" indiscriminately to the political situation in Athens and in Switzerland, we are giving an untrue picture.

**Strict Use of Words.**

The historical student is not often called upon to invent new terms, since his phenomena are taken from the past and have already been named, but he is bound in the interest of exactitude and truth to use these terms with care, not only when attempting to describe and discuss an institution or law but also in making a comparison or a passing allusion. It is a part of good literary style to use words which mean precisely what the writer intends to say, though the same thing cannot always be said for popular conversation. It is not necessary in order to be clear to repeat the same words over and over as in a geometrical proposition, nor yet should one seek for supposed synonyms when an institution or an historical situation is at stake. Conscience should be applied even to adjectives.<sup>1</sup>

**Chronological and Thematic Treatment.**

Each historical topic can be viewed in either of two lights, the chronological or the thematic, and upon the choice depends the perspective of the general arrangement. The treatment may follow simply the development of the nation or the region in years and centuries, or the various parts of the social organization may be taken up one after

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another; yet any history which is to rise above a mere chronology, diary, or tabular view must combine the thematic with the chronological arrangement. The story of a nation is not profitably treated in a purely chronological order, for the political, constitutional, literary and social phases will each have a different development. The history of England is one of the simplest for treatment. It has unity and continuity which makes it an admirable subject for a course of study. After the Norman Conquest, at least, there is but one government to consider until after a long time the kingdoms of Scotland and Ireland are fused with the English center. In the modern period of expansion the matter becomes more complicated, yet in all this simplicity the historian must have respect for the relative gravity of the parts, and give space according to the time and importance of events as they contribute to the development of the English people. x

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American History.

all going at an even pace year by year. Anything like a logical development of the nation would be lost in the devotion to chronology. The proper method would be to take up at first the colonies in the order of their foundation and endeavor to show the steps by which they came together, bringing forward each one from time to time as its part becomes important in the growth of the union. Later on under the national government one region is sometimes more in evidence than another at a given moment and the treatment should reflect the situation. This is the "dramatic arrangement," and is simply the rule observed by the playwright who brings forward his characters when they have something to say which contributes to the development of the plot. Between times they remain behind the scenes.

**Dramatic Arrangement.**

The historical student will not find his material often adapted to the technical unities of the drama, but the analogy is pertinent in determining the perspective of his narrative. This very matter of the relative importance of things requires careful preliminary study and is not without certain peril of its own. First, there is the danger of making the wrong thing the center of interest. A misguided or unconscious patriotism may bring the native country of the author into the scene as the most prominent feature. Such would be a history of the middle ages which gave Germany the principal part in the story with only incidental reference to France and Italy. A plan of this kind might be allowed in a school text-book when the main objec



is to teach the national history, but the trouble is also found in more serious work. The territorial or state history can easily exaggerate the importance of its subject. The history of New England, justly significant as it is, has often received an undue proportion of weight in the development of American institutions because that region was the first to produce abundant writers of history. This tendency is rarely due to a desire to magnify one region at the expense of another, but is a subjective influence requiring all the more preliminary caution. Biographers are particularly liable to distort the perspective of their works by exaggerating the importance of their chosen character. Long study of one personality seems to lead naturally to that result. The biographer, being better informed than his readers, must know many more details about his subject and will undoubtedly see more fine points in his character, but at the same time he must beware lest he succumb to the subtle temptation to magnify the value of his own task.

On the other hand, a fine sense of literary art or *Emphasis.* a natural dramatic instinct may also lead to emphasis at the wrong point. This criticism would probably apply to portions or passages in a work, rather than to the whole plan. In attempting to make a history interesting one meets a natural temptation to bring the account to a proper climax, or to have the climax apparent and clear. Sometimes an author has favorites in his period and perhaps unconsciously makes one character stand out more dramatically than another. It is easy under such

circumstances to distort the true condition of things. The literary impulses of the author may easily lead him to warp the facts just a little. In ascribing motives, in making a keen comparison or a brilliant antithesis, the real situation may be obscured. However painful the restraint may be, a respect for the truth will require him to abstain at such places from unwarranted dramatic climaxes and literary adornments.

Analysis of  
Theme.

In historical work the plan, as we have seen, is largely determined by the nature of the theme, but it lies with the author to make this plan apparent or not. In some cases, particularly where a new field has been opened or an old point is controverted, it is wiser to indicate in advance what the order of arrangement will be. This can be done mechanically in analytical tables of contents, or after the form of legal briefs, where a statement of the points to be made is placed at the opening of the paper—"we expect to prove as follows," etc. Less formally the plan can be indicated in the course of the narrative itself, but repetitions of points or enumerations of arguments ought not to be too frequent, or the reader will be wearied. The scaffolding of the structure is extremely important to the investigator himself, but it is better not to leave this prominently in the sight of the public. It has been said that every writer should make the indexes of his own books, because he knows best the significance of his own topics. It can also be affirmed that every investigator should make an analytical table of contents of his work for his own

benefit, so that he may be sure that his argument is conclusive and his order of presentation the best.

In the processes of criticism and construction we have been considering constantly the personal equation in memoirs, statements, and documents, with a view to getting hold of the true accounts of events. We have seen that the individual is but a medium of transmission for whose peculiarities allowance must be made, and that with the best of intentions our sources still remain slightly colored by personality. In view of this condition of things, both in the nature of the materials and the mental equipment of mankind, the question arises at once as to whether it is possible to write history in a purely neutral tint. Can we eliminate the historian, and if so, is it necessary or desirable? The topic has been the basis of much discussion over "objectivity and subjectivity" in historical narrative. In the course of the controversy the terms have lost keenness in definition, particularly in German historical circles, but there are two ways in which history may be written that indicate the solution to our first query. Objectivity.

First, there have been writers who avowedly gave forth their own impressions of past events. They absorbed the materials, they noticed the effect on their own minds, then presented their mental operations and perhaps the emotions raised in themselves by a contemplation of bygone scenes. Carlyle's French Revolution is more or less a history of this order. Why should we not ask each historian to speak for himself and then, having struck an average Subjectivity.

between them all, give the name History to that which is apparently the average impression made upon scholarly men? The proposal hardly needs an answer. It may be interesting to know how the study of the past affects the emotions of men who devote themselves to it, but the results can hardly be accepted as history. If history is the narration of things as they really were, the subjective treatment is a study in moralities rather than realities. Scholars by this method may possibly give us a true reflection of the times about which they write, but the chances are that they have only added one more psychological problem to the many already encountered. Subjective historical writing is curious, but it is not history.

Suppression of  
the Author  
Impossible.

On the other hand the writer who removes himself entirely from the historical narrative must suppress all personal opinions or emotions about the persons or events to be described. To do this absolutely is impossible. Not until the human race has been made over on a new pattern will a purely objective account of any period be made. In the identification of sources we should be deprived of one of the most valuable clues if it were not that the characteristics of the writer are bound in some manner to appear. In spite of the greatest care opinions will crop out even in the choice of adjectives, or the turning of phrases, or the omissions in treatment. The question, therefore, is not concerning the absolute suppression of the author, but whether his personality can be reduced to a negligible quantity.

Certain faults of presentation cannot well be excused. If the distorted picture is due to lack of care in preparation we are confronted with all of the difficulties which were encountered in the study of historical criticism. If the materials are rare and incomplete at the time of the inquiry the author cannot be blamed if at a later time the picture appears faulty, but if the critical work has been slovenly there will be errors in the conception, as well as in the formal presentation. Laziness is a sin to which historians are susceptible like other people. Short cuts are much more convenient than circuitous examinations, and it is extremely easy to draw conclusions before ascertaining that every item of data is correct, or before all conditions have been duly weighed.

Outspoken prejudice and blind devotion to preconceived ideas are faults which everybody abhors, in theory at least. It is the more subtle influences which bring the writer into trouble. A pessimistic view of human nature may lead one to ascribe every action to selfish motives, or a person of high ideals may be equally at fault in assuming that his characters are all on the same level. There is no average moral rule which mankind follows. Every episode must stand on its own moral basis, for the same men sometimes follow higher and sometimes lower motives.

Assuming that we are historical students of reasonable mental endowment, that we have given conscientious care to the collection and sifting of materials, that we are sufficiently gifted with imagi-

Faulty Preparation.

The Historian not an Automaton.

nation, so that we can visualize the events of the past, is it necessary in the presentation of connected work to avoid all expression of feeling, or all moral deductions? An examination of the great historians, either ancient or modern, will show that they have not suppressed themselves. It may be truly said that it is the aim of historical science to state facts, not to give vent to feelings. Too much emotion has been encountered in political and religious conflicts, and thereby added much to the critical difficulties of the investigator, but this is no reason why the historian may not comment on persons and events as they pass by. It is not necessary that the man who studies history should suppress all natural feelings in order to gain a sort of emotional Nirvana, whence he can contemplate all human action with indifference. An expression of patriotic joy, approval of a good action, or righteous indignation at an injustice is not incompatible with historical science. It is possible to have feelings and yet write a true report of an event. It is a matter of taste in literary style. From that point of view it is advisable to use restraint. While the historian is yet to be considered a human being, it is better for him not to display his own emotions too prominently, but to relate the matter so that his reader will be moved by the tale itself. In any attempt a moral comment he will bear in mind that he is at the same time to hold the scales of justice with an even hand.

## CHAPTER XXV

## LITERARY STYLE IN HISTORY

SIR George Lewis remarks that history lies under a peculiar disadvantage in that it is in itself "amusing." The statistics and observations in a natural science are not very interesting in their fragmentary state, however startling the final result. In history, on the other hand, the minor incidents, owing to human curiosity about the fellowman, are entertaining in themselves. It is this peculiarity that tempts the author to put in more incidents than the true perspective admits and leads to other critical troubles already discussed. The situation draws out the question of literary style for history.

Shall history be written for the entertainment of the public, or, whatever the object, is there a literary form peculiar to the needs of the historical writer? The question comes up with every monograph as well as with every extended work, whether it ought to be written in an interesting manner, or whether the author shall put it down as he thinks he finds it and let the public take the consequences. By a certain school of investigators, not confined to any one country, it has been regarded as a sign of weakness to show any regard for literary form. To be artistic with them is to be unscientific, and the readers take the consequences. This conviction is

Object of History.

due to the unfortunate fact that for so many ages history was regarded as but one branch of literature, and literary arts were employed to make it more palatable. The modern scientific revolt against superficial investigation went to the other extreme, and there are persons yet who look upon Gibbon and Macaulay with more or less of disdain. Perhaps the German historians as a class have less regard for style than others, yet the fact that the highest types of research come from that country makes one pause before giving an answer to the problem of form.

Is History an  
Art?

Taine says: "History is an art, it is true, but it is also a science; it demands of the writer inspiration, but it also demands of him reflection; if it has the imagination for a hand maid, it has for its instrument prudent criticism and circumspect generalization. Its pictures must be as vivid as those of poetry, but its style must also be as exact, its divisions as well marked, its laws as well proved, its inductions as precise as those of natural history."<sup>1</sup>

This is a definition made in the course of an essay upon an historian whose work belongs particularly in the realm of literature, and the critic shows a more modern conception of the duties of the historical writer than the subject of his criticism. At the same time, one can hardly conceive of a German admitting that history is an art. In fact, the rôle of art in the presentation of history holds a secondary place and must be distinctly set apart, for the object of history is to set forth the truth, not to produce an æsthetic effect. The object of art is to produce

<sup>1</sup> Taine, *Essais de Critique et d'Histoire*, p. 3, on "Michelet."



another; yet any history which is to rise above a mere chronology, diary, or tabular view must combine the thematic with the chronological arrangement. The story of a nation is not profitably treated in a purely chronological order, for the political, constitutional, literary and social phases will each have a different development. The history of England is one of the simplest for treatment. It has unity and continuity which makes it an admirable subject for a course of study. After the Norman Conquest, at least, there is but one government to consider until after a long time the kingdoms of Scotland and Ireland are fused with the English center. In the modern period of expansion the matter becomes more complicated, yet in all this simplicity the historian must have respect for the relative gravity of the parts, and give space according to the time and importance of events as they contribute to the development of the English people.

The history of the United States presents another kind of problem, as it has to do with a collection of separate colonies which eventually became one federation, while at the same time each state retained a certain amount of individuality. It would be most undesirable to take up the history of each state and work them all out one at a time from the beginning to the present day, for that would be simply a collection of narratives. It would not be a history of the United States, but rather a dis-united history of the states of America. Nor, on the other hand, is it possible to keep the accounts

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Certain faults of presentation cannot well be excused. If the distorted picture is due to lack of care in preparation we are confronted with all of the difficulties which were encountered in the study of historical criticism. If the materials are rare and incomplete at the time of the inquiry the author cannot be blamed if at a later time the picture appears faulty, but if the critical work has been slovenly there will be errors in the conception, as well as in the formal presentation. Laziness is a sin to which historians are susceptible like other people. Short cuts are much more convenient than circuitous examinations, and it is extremely easy to draw conclusions before ascertaining that every item of data is correct, or before all conditions have been duly weighed. Faulty Preparation.

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## CHAPTER XXV

### LITERARY STYLE IN HISTORY

SIR George Lewis remarks that history lies under a peculiar disadvantage in that it is in itself "amusing." The statistics and observations in a natural science are not very interesting in their fragmentary state, however startling the final result. In history, on the other hand, the minor incidents, owing to human curiosity about the fellowman, are entertaining in themselves. It is this peculiarity that tempts the author to put in more incidents than the true perspective admits and leads to other critical troubles already discussed. The situation draws out the question of literary style for history.

Shall history be written for the entertainment of the public, or, whatever the object, is there a literary form peculiar to the needs of the historical writer? The question comes up with every monograph as well as with every extended work, whether it ought to be written in an interesting manner, or whether the author shall put it down as he thinks he finds it and let the public take the consequences. By a certain school of investigators, not confined to any one country, it has been regarded as a sign of weakness to show any regard for literary form. To be artistic with them is to be unscientific, and the readers take the consequences. This conviction is

Object of History.

due to the unfortunate fact that for so many ages history was regarded as but one branch of literature, and literary arts were employed to make it more palatable. The modern scientific revolt against superficial investigation went to the other extreme, and there are persons yet who look upon Gibbon and Macaulay with more or less of disdain. Perhaps the German historians as a class have less regard for style than others, yet the fact that the highest types of research come from that country makes one pause before giving an answer to the problem of form.

Is History an  
Art?

Taine says: "History is an art, it is true, but it is also a science; it demands of the writer inspiration, but it also demands of him reflection; if it has the imagination for a hand maid, it has for its instrument prudent criticism and circumspect generalization. Its pictures must be as vivid as those of poetry, but its style must also be as exact, its divisions as well marked, its laws as well proved, its inductions as precise as those of natural history."<sup>1</sup>

This is a definition made in the course of an essay upon an historian whose work belongs particularly in the realm of literature, and the critic shows a more modern conception of the duties of the historical writer than the subject of his criticism. At the same time, one can hardly conceive of a German admitting that history is an art. In fact, the rôle of art in the presentation of history holds a secondary place and must be distinctly set apart, for the object of history is to set forth the truth, not to produce an æsthetic effect. The object of art is to produce

<sup>1</sup> Taine, *Essais de Critique et d'Histoire*, p. 3, on "Michelet."

a consistent whole. A piece of sculpture presents an ideal figure, or perhaps an historical personage, at a given moment in a way to produce upon the mind an effect which is complete in itself. A painting depicts a scene, either imaginary or historical, which, like a painted sunset, stands still, a finished act. A musical work endeavors to impress upon the hearer a rounded and complete effect. The literary artist sets for himself the task of unrolling a plot, or developing a character, and endeavors to bring the complicated situations to a consistent end. These are simple standards which the public every day unconsciously applies to pictures or to fiction.

In the writing of history it is not always possible to make complete pictures. However devoted to art one may desire to be, the materials of history are often inconveniently defective. The course of human society is more or less prosaic, and things proceed with very brutal disregard for the dramatic proprieties. Consequently, if the aim of the writer is simply to make a good piece of literature, measured by the canons of art rather than science, he will find himself very often strongly tempted to bring his facts up to fit the composition. In creative works of art the materials may be drawn from anywhere, but in history they must be related as they happened. The scientific imagination will find itself fully occupied in supplying the missing facts which logically must have occurred, rather than in the invention of things which will best fill out an artistic plot or a moving description.

No Picture  
Complete.

On the other hand, if there is any object in his Effect Sought.

torical work beyond the collection of documents it must be to exert an effect upon the readers. The monograph may be written for the select few and the general history for the many, but in either case the matter must be adapted to its auditory and some attention must be given to the form of presentation. It goes without saying that the historical essay, written to set forth a new discovery or propound a new view, must devote itself to the logic of its arguments. This is best secured by the marshalling of facts, rather than by figures of speech, but it need not be forgotten that a well-ordered argument can give pleasure like a work of art. In France the standards of literary art demand above all that the essay shall be convincing, but it must be put together in its most logical order and with the most appropriate words. The reader is under no obligation to pick out an argument from a confused jumble of materials.

Style Con-  
forms to Per-  
iod.

It may be that the readers of this book will in the immediate future be more often engaged in short studies in history than in extensive general works, but in almost all brief essays there are portions which partake of the same nature as the extended narrative, hence a discussion of the larger problem is not out of place. Briefly stated, the style of the most effective historians has conformed to the age in which they lived. The stately periods and the finished phraseology of Gibbon were products of the literary art of the eighteenth century. The *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* remains a classic because it both conformed to, and confirmed, the literary

canons of a period of refined taste. It is the English of the Spectator and of Gibbon's contemporary, Hume. Perhaps we may agree with Frederic Harrison that the subject was of such paramount importance that Gibbon could do no less than relate it in a style of equal dignity and magnificence. However this may be, it is certain that the author had in view the cultivated portion of the English public and upheld the highest traditions of the language. There is, moreover, such a clarity of expression that the narrative is comprehensible to the simplest reader. As to his scientific accuracy, we must recognize a master mind. Since Gibbon's day much more evidence has come to light, but if one examines the latest revision of the *Decline and Fall*, edited by a scholar who knows the field, it will be found that very few essential views had to be changed. The amount of actual correction is astonishingly small.<sup>1</sup>

In English history Hume has passed out of sight Macaulay. because of his inadequate method of investigation. No amount of fine language will take the place of careful research. Macaulay came next in succession as a popular favorite in historical reading, and he also kept up the tradition for carefulness in the use of language. His phraseology is polished, his periods well rounded, and his paragraphs complete. There is a smoothness in the work which makes his pages easy to read. In fact, it was this smoothness that

<sup>1</sup> See Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, edited by J. B. Bury. The modern changes are mentioned in separate footnotes.

led people in the course of time to think that the contents could not have been well prepared. Finding various mistakes along with some perfectly obvious tendencies in personal bias, it was suspected that the beautiful style was only a cover for hasty research. This view is erroneous, for Macaulay was a prodigious worker, and brought to bear a phenomenal memory upon a vast amount of material. The faults lie chiefly in the partisan prejudices of the author and the tendency to make comparisons and antitheses for literary effect. Macaulay's hold on the public was enormous and the sale of the history in cheap editions continues to be very large. This is testimony to the permanent results of good work, for the period chosen was by no means the most vital in English history and furnished no dramatic unity in the story itself. Macaulay's avowed purpose of making the subject interesting was fully accomplished, yet it would be most unwise to imitate his methods. The style is too flowing for the taste of the present day and would fail of its effect.

**Buckle.**

The nineteenth century furnished numerous other writers of history whose place among English authors is definitely marked. For example, Thomas Buckle's *History of Civilization in England* is most delightfully presented. Buckle had not only original ideas, but very striking and entertaining ways of setting them forth. For a time his theories had a wide influence in foreign countries as well as England, and now, although untenable as a whole, his views are still stimulating in their interesting



garb. If Carlyle could be counted among historians **Carlyle.** we might take notice of the great vogue his writings obtained in his lifetime, yet his style was far removed from the classical examples, being full of short sentences, interjections, and exclamation points. It was the poetic glamour thrown over his subjects that gave them their popular attraction. The brevity of expression was an indication of a modern tendency.

Freeman's contributions to English history were **Freeman.** not set forth in a style commensurate with their significance. While in no sense obscure, his chapters are often diffused and repetitious. Most of his writings have the faults which are liable to occur in the spoken address. The author is more or less combative in attitude and his papers are argumentative. In trying to make important points clear he repeats them again and again. This is the method of the advocate before the jury and results in leaving the reader with a good idea of the case, but the process is unnecessarily wearisome.

It is rather unfortunate for the cause of good **Froude.** writing that Freeman's great contemporary and historical opponent should have possessed greater literary gifts than critical judgment. Froude left his mark upon a large field of English history in a style that is not only entertaining, but dignified and suitable to an important period. His narrative is in large measure reliable, but at critical points is vitiated by a perverted conception of the English Reformation. The evidence seems to have had no effect on his own mind, yet one cannot but believe

that the literary effort expended upon Froude's twelve volumes could have been fully as effectively applied to a scientific history of the period. There are no literary devices employed in his work that would interfere with truth telling, if the author had been capable of it.

Style and  
Theme.

The possibility of writing history in an interesting manner naturally depends somewhat upon the topic chosen. Constitutional history, for example, is not a subject which lends itself easily to graces of style. To the special student of political science the growth of constitutions and laws is fundamental and he finds interest in every aspect, but to the general cultivated reader it remains an acquired taste. Bishop Stubbs displayed wonderful industry and acumen in his three volumes on the English Constitution, but the work is hard to read. One wishes that the chapter on the "Thegn" were written in dialect, or that some other violent means had been taken to keep the attention. Yet the matter is not hopeless. F. W. Maitland wrote of constitutional and legal topics in a manner graceful and entertaining. He had an advantage over Stubbs in that his constitutional history is a short review of a long period, while Stubbs enters with great detail into the first half only. It is the keen mind of Maitland that shines through his language without effort.

The highest types of the earlier American historians employed what may be called the eloquent style. Prescott, Motley, and Bancroft were patriots as well as literary artists, in their respective fields. Bancroft's first editions were decidedly oratorical

in tone, but this aspect was notably changed in the author's later revisions. Prescott and Motley had high conceptions of their duties both as investigators and as writers of English prose. As time goes on their narratives will undergo correction by later students, but they will long remain as monuments of a literary style. Motley in particular was gifted with descriptive powers of a high order, and in general there is movement and vivacity in his story of the Dutch Republic. His account of the abdication of Charles V, for example, is a model of sustained description, touching persons and ceremonies connected with a most important juncture in European history. His description of the marriage of William of Orange gives a personal setting and a local color to the political situation which one would not anticipate from an occasion usually purely festive.

It would be out of place to attempt here an analysis of the living historical writers of today. Contemporary  
Historians. Let it suffice to say that in general there is a change toward greater simplicity in language and far less appeal to the emotions. Attention to history on the part of the public has increased because of the wider range of human interests touched upon by modern writers. The economic and social side of life adds attraction as well as importance to the purely political or military narrative. The modern reader has lost the taste for classical allusions and long, rounded periods, and the fact is reflected in the shorter, more direct style of the historians, as well as of other writers.

A good literary style cannot be attained by a

study of rules alone. Only constant familiarity with the best examples will create the intuitive sense of form, and one may reasonably ask if the historian is really obliged to give attention to these matters, and if so, how far. Modern writers in other fields conform to the literary taste of their time, but is the historian compelled to follow that example? In answering he is confronted with the reason for writing history. In large part that object is to produce some effect on a reading public, and, on the whole, it is good policy for him to attempt first to influence his contemporaries. To do this he must speak unaffectedly in their own language. If he looks forward to the applause of posterity he will find a permanent monument in a clear, persuasive style, perfectly adapted to the object of the work. The discriminating future will approve the forms which once convinced the author's fellowmen.

Standard of  
Style.

In doing this there is no need of debasing the standards of good English. To be popular it is not necessary to write like a reporter for a sporting journal. As good prose is written today as ever appeared, consequently there is also no reason to imitate slavishly the famous writers of a previous generation. No matter how much we may admire the style of Gibbon, Motley, or Parkman, one must take account of the taste of the day. Suggestions about the organization of the matter and about plans of presentation may come from others, but the writer must speak his own tongue. His style is the choice of the forms most suitable to the subject as sanctioned by the best literary taste of the time.

The search for models is not confined to contemporary historians, for the literary workmen of other branches have much to suggest. As already noted, the writer of fiction, even in the most severely historical romance, has an advantage over the historian in his freedom to supply incidents and descriptions when real materials fail, but from the novelist the history writer can learn much about the organization of his work, and how real facts can be most effectively stated. The novelist dramatizes his work in part by introducing conversation, or by letting one character relate the whole tale. The historian will not imitate this method, but he can study the art of description, because this is one of the gifts of the great novelists, and one which is based upon a principle fundamentally necessary to the student of history. Good description rests on accurate observation of essentials. Not every detail is necessary in a picture. A sketch of a few lines may give a more characteristic impression than a drawing with every leaf in sight. So in words, it is an art to know what to leave out.

It is by the proper use of description that events and persons are visualized and set in motion, and it is the duty of the historian to give his matter life. He need not take time to depict the glories of the setting sun, nor revel in the whispering breezes so essential to a love story, but his characters and scenes should have color and movement, so that the reader may obtain the true impression. The best descriptions are the most concrete. The use of abstract terms is a necessity in certain kinds of

The Art of Description.

work, but the ordinary historical narrative will be most effective when abstractions are, as far as possible, avoided. The novelist has been spending his time studying social situations, varieties of persons, natural scenery and other matters, but he has learned to see essentials. His counsel will be useful to the more prosaic historian.

**Brevity.**

Finally, the world demands brevity, if it is to give its attention. Not abruptness in language, but compression of matter into reasonable compass, is a fair requirement. The study of perspective ought to include not only the contents of the work in hand, but the relation of the subject to history at large. Most of our labors would diminish in size if tested by their relative value. Writers of monographs are with difficulty convinced that their productions could be shortened, but their efforts would usually be far more effective if cut in twain.

**Literary  
Habits.**

The literary habits of historical writers have no peculiarities which set them apart from other scientific authors. The rules of mental hygiene which apply to one will apply to the others. The individual worker has to decide for himself the time of day when he is most effective, and will adjust his work so far as possible to that end. The majority of historical investigators at present are connected with institutions of learning, and their first duties must be directed to their academic work. This often places the research at the end of the day, or in hours of fatigue, with the result that tasks are prolonged, completion is deferred, and sometimes discouragement overcomes the ardent beginner.

One division of labor can be profitably borne in mind. Historical work consists in general of two parts, the collection of data and the construction of the results. The gathering of material does not call forth the same mental energy as the combination of ideas. One may collect statistics, compare titles, verify footnotes, or copy documents, at times when it would be unwise to attempt composition. On the other hand, constructive work, the long view of things, the final judgment upon the course of events, should have the best conditions of the mind and should not be hurried.

As in literature in general, the work will improve Revision. with revision. History is not a subject which pours red hot from the writer's brain. Perhaps even poetry cannot claim that honor, but the historical narrative certainly needs repeated filing for two reasons, one, because the judgment improves with reconsideration, and the other, because the form of expression should by constant study be made more and more suitable to the truth. The great historians have not spared themselves in revision. George Bancroft, for example, was not only most methodical in the collection of materials, but his first draft would sometimes get seven revisions before the author was satisfied to send it to the printer.

Even when one is so fortunate as to command his Use of Time. own time it is necessary to be regular and methodical in work, and in academic surroundings still more so. It is rather depressing to observe that the monumental histories in the English tongue have been written by men of independent means, and who

were not actively connected with universities. This is not true in Germany, where the conception of the professor is that his first duty lies in research, and his academic appointments are made to suit that ideal. Yet even in America, where much more time is required for teaching and other duties, the hard-worked instructor is furnishing the fundamental investigations upon which historical knowledge is advancing.

In view of the large number of promising candidates annually sent out, the product is not so great as might well be expected. The fault is not altogether at the door of the young professor, but in any case the long and arduous investigations demanded by historical research can be accomplished only by self-discipline and the careful husbandry of time.



## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE HISTORICAL NOVEL

THE writer of history and the writer of historical novels do not usually unite in the same person, nor do the requirements of the art necessarily assist the labors of the science, but the border-line is so often crossed that it may be in place to consider the limits of the two vocations. As we have seen, the historian frequently gets abroad into the realm of imagination, and the novelist takes pride in the historical accuracy of his pictures. A few modern instances will illustrate the situation, which is here set forth, not with the expectation that the novelists will pay any attention to the recommendations, but to open the discussion for the historical student.

In the preface to her book entitled "The Conqueror" Miss Gertrude Atherton relates that it had been her "original intention to write a biography of Alexander Hamilton in a more flexible manner than is customary," but after visiting the scenes of his early life and becoming more widely acquainted with his career "the instinct of the novelist proved too strong." Consequently she wrote a novel with Hamilton as the chief figure, on the principle with which we can all agree that "the character is but a dramatized biography." Yet the author is sure that almost every incident is founded upon established

facts or family tradition. The rest of the episodes and descriptions are suggestive probabilities. She is captivated by the dramatic possibilities of Hamilton's career. "Why, then, not throw the graces of fiction over the sharp hard facts that historians have laboriously gathered?" With that she proceeds to do so.

To any one with a spark of imagination it is impossible not to sympathize with the author in this situation. To the historical student it is a most interesting confession, for it is the temptation which has attacked every chronicler since the world began. Historians have not generally acknowledged the fact, except in the works of others, but the desire to tell a good story has been the besetting sin of that profession ever since Herodotus became the father of it. The mediæval chronicler accepted and passed forward everything that oral tradition had added to the "sharp hard facts" of reality, and when more was needed to explain or give piquancy to the narrative his imagination did not fail him. Thus St. Ursula got all her eleven thousand virgins, and William Tell took root in Switzerland. Embellishment of the plain or incomplete truth has been the cause of nearly all the trouble in the transmission of history, and the chief business of the scholar is to eliminate the errors of his predecessors; errors not necessarily willfully committed, but largely due to the unlicensed imagination.

If anyone says that historical fiction has had its day do not believe it, for the story out of the past has a perennial attraction of its own. From time

to time the reading public apparently becomes saturated with productions in the romantic line, and is willing to turn aside from the middle ages and the eighteenth century to some quiet period or scene where the rapiers flash no longer and the brawlers are at rest. On one occasion a publisher, anticipating this trend of feeling, went so far as to boast in capital letters that his forthcoming volume was "NOT HISTORICAL," assuming, as it were, that this statement alone, with no mention of the plan of the work, or of the number of thousand copies ordered before publication, would be sufficient to sell the book. The reaction of taste may call for a season of psychological problems, or for modern society romances. There is no telling in advance what may be favorably received by the public. In the meantime the really good historical novel will take its place in permanent literature and will be read by those who do not require of their book that it be the newest thing, still hot from the haste of its composition.

Of course it is to be assumed that the first object of an historical novel is to entertain. If any other benefits are to be derived they are more or less by-products of the process. It is not primarily to teach history, but to entertain by telling a tale in the words, surroundings, and characters of the past. Any other kind is apt to meet the fate of those Oliver Optic books which took their youthful heroes abroad on personally conducted educational tours. At regular intervals the tutor held a lecture on the history of the country or city which they approached.

These chapters were full of excellent information and were regularly skipped by the about-to-be-educated youthful readers.

As a further component part of the entertainment the love story has a place in the historical novel, if long usage is a rightful warrant, for no popular plot or play has been without one since Isaac and Rebecca figured in the idyls of the patriarchs. Consequently, it is only a question of the language or costume in which this perennial drama shall appear. Without any disguise the old story unfailingly attracts, but when placed in a distant age it adds another pleasure to find that men in purple togas grew hot or cold at sight of dimpled arms in snowy tunics, or that very human hearts beat hard inside the woven-wire shirts of the crusading centuries. Here is where the romance outruns the document. In the prosaic study of real ancients we see so many hieroglyphic pictures of Egyptians in angular positions and wooden attitudes that it is hard to get rid of the impression that they were a bloodless race of jumping-jacks, until some kindly novelist, like George Ebers, clothes them in flesh and makes them breathe again. Therefore, for reasons which affect both writers and readers, one may count on finding lovers as essential features in the novels of the hour and in the historical fiction of the future.

Novels take a wide variety of form and plot, but they are all by nature biographical. The scenery may be continental in scope, and the historical period may be momentous to the last degree, but the story, after all, revolves about the fictive history

of one or more prominent characters. Whether you call the book *The Talisman*, *The Crisis*, or *The Captain*, you have to deal with persons. Frequently, to give vividness to the story, the autobiographical form is used, as in *Lorna Doone*, where the amiable giant John Ridd presents his reminiscences. In other cases letters serve the same purpose, and novelists at times perform stupendous miracles of discovery in order to give their readers manuscripts written in the first person. All of which is perfectly reasonable, since the novel is meant to entertain.

Stories of people are more amusing than histories of principles, or developments of constitutional clauses. Whatever moral purpose may be behind the novel, whether the tale be detective or sociological, the interest lies in the destinies of its particular dramatis personæ. Again, the story has more force if it seems to be told about real persons, for we are marvelously fond of gossip about the private life of interesting people. In fact, life-likeness is the subtle test of literary art, and explains why historical characters are so frequently used in fiction. Their presence is supposed to give the air of reality to the imaginary portions of the narrative. To gain this the writer has two methods. One is to create his characters and plot entirely out of his own fancy, the other to make use of persons who have actually lived, and to bring them bodily into a story. A combination of both is the usual result.

Granting with pleasure that there is a place and a demand for the historical novel, what are the

limits within which historical facts and personages ought to be used? In the first place, it is fair to demand that the history shall not be distorted. In fact, it is not necessary to question the intentions of most writers, for they clamorously insist upon the fidelity of their historical information. We may well question, however, whether the authors dispose their facts so as to make them tell the truth. There seems to be no reason why a fanciful plot should not be acted in the dress, scenery, and dialect of a former age, nor is there any vital objection to the description of battles, scenes at court and in council, or any other events which may serve as a background for the destiny of the imaginary characters. Victor Hugo's description of the battle of Waterloo may be noted as a single important example. Also the personal characteristics and actions of rulers and statesmen usually have an effect upon the general welfare, and this atmosphere may without sacrifice of truth be shared by the fictive characters of the novel.

The description of actual men and women is a part of the scenery and conditions of the period, but the novelist is not content to stop at that point. He commonly insists that his real characters shall play in an imaginary plot. Here is where the line ought to be drawn. The introduction of prominent historical figures as speaking personages in the novel is the point where the distortion is bound to come in. The deflections from truth may be greater or less, but it is impossible to provide interviews and conversations conformable to a fictive plot without

putting words in the mouths of historical characters which they never uttered, or did not speak in the given connection.

Eminent examples of transgression are easy to find. Walter Scott brings Queen Elizabeth and Leicester to the front of the stage in *Kenilworth*. Imaginary conversation is put into their mouths, although the sentiments expressed seem to be consistent. In *Woodstock* the adventures of Charles II are acted by that royal person, not only with fictive words, but with an entire change of scene from that of the true history. In the more artistic portions of Scott's work, however, the actual personages appear more by description and less in dramatic form. In the *Talisman* King Richard I constantly plays a talking part, while the history of the third crusade is totally disarranged to suit the purposes of the writer.

So it goes on from Alfred the Great to President Garfield, the authors priding themselves on what the theologians would call the "historicity" of their work. Abraham Lincoln is made to participate in the affairs of a youth otherwise unknown to fame. This proceeds not simply by way of description, but by conversation with the hero and with others in fictitious situations in the usual *Lincolnesque* dialect. In the effort to make the story seem true the Freeport episode of Lincoln's sensational campaign is related with great circumstantiality, in fact almost identically as found in Miss Tarbell's life of Lincoln. At the same time words are put into Lincoln's mouth which are acknowledged to

be fictitious, but are supposed to be characteristic. Such is the source of all myth.

General Grant furnishes the title and fills a prominent rôle in a recent tale of love and war. His character is painted sympathetically and the descriptive matter is historically unobjectionable, but this great man is made to talk invented words to invented characters for the sake of a love story. It gives one the same feeling as when the lion-tamer brings out the patriarch of the desert and makes that venerable king of beasts jump through hoops and perform on milking stools. In the "Conqueror" Hamilton is constantly in the foreground. The descriptive portions of the narrative are not only historically careful, but extremely interesting. Certain readers may skip the chapters on the theory of American finance and the founding of the national bank, but the political situation is always vividly described. Why was it necessary, then, to make Hamilton play a talking part, and thus put words in his mouth and create situations which are manifestly fictitious? His biography was already sufficiently romantic.

There is, perhaps, a gift of insight which can recreate the thoughts and words which real historic characters might have said upon imaginary occasions, but too many novelists depend on phrases borrowed from recorded episodes, expecting that these disconnected sentiments will lend reality to an artificial plot. As an inevitable result one class of readers will always associate real personages with untrue incidents, while another class is revolted at



the transparency of the literary dodge. This is not creative genius, but the art of the stencil plate.

There is a place for the historical novelist, but if he wishes to show true inventive genius let him create, not borrow his characters. Let his fictive personages be so described and so speak that they shall reflect the very image of the age in which they move. Let the passions and ambitions of the human race be depicted in the language and the garb of every century since the world began, and historians and reading world alike will join in the applause. To reach this end true art demands that real historical personages and events shall form the background, not the players and the plot of fiction.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The substance of this chapter was first published in the *Book Lover's Magazine*, now extinct.



## APPENDIX

### A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH.

For about two centuries writers of various nations have been steadily discussing the nature of history and the object of its study, with the consequence that the volume of literature is enormous. A part of this material is valuable for the history of changing conceptions of history, while a much larger portion is devoted to the division of history into periods and the suggestion of plans for its teaching and exposition. In the remaining portion of this mass are to be found the works which treat of methods of historical research. Among these the more valuable are among the more recent, and the beginner may profitably select rather than devour the whole.

#### GENERAL WORKS ON METHOD OF RESEARCH.

Foremost among these is the *Lehrbuch der Historischen Methode*, by ERNST BERNHEIM, 6th ed., 1908. This is a voluminous treatment of the materials of history, the theory of criticism, the processes of construction, and the philosophy of history. The later editions have given increased space to the latter topic, but their value depends more on the increased references to newer literature. This volume is much indebted to Bernheim for general plan and method of treatment. LANGLOIS AND SEIGNOBOS, *Introduction aux études historiques*, Paris, 1898. Translation by G. B. Berry, 1898 (now out of print). Without attempting to be encyclopedic this provides a stimulating review of the theory and practice of research. CHARLES SEIGNOBOS, *La Méthode Historique appliquée aux Sciences Sociales*, Paris, 1901. Treats of the methods to be

used by the student of statistical and economic history with particular reference to the materials to be met in this field. GUSTAV WOLF, *Einführung in das Studium der Neueren Geschichte*, Berlin, 1910. An elaborate work on the materials of modern history, to be regarded as a complement to the *Lehrbuch* of Bernheim. In treatment it discusses the theoretical value of the sources, while attempting at the same time to provide a bibliographical handbook for the modern period, chiefly in German history. *Grundriss der Geschichtswissenschaft*, edited by ALOYS MEISTER, 2 vols., 1906 (in progress). An extremely brief outline of historical method is followed by practical treatises on the auxiliary sciences written by men of the highest authority. The remainder of the work is given to historiographical studies in constitutional, economic, and religious history, which fulfil the promises of the subtitle as an "introduction to the history of Germany in the middle ages and modern times." GEORGE CORNEWALL LEWIS, *A Treatise on the Methods of Observation and Reasoning in Politics*, 2 vols., London, 1852. An old book but full of suggestion upon the interpretation of historical materials. E. MEYER, *Zur Theorie und Methodik der Geschichte*, Halle, 1902. Short and sane. J. G. DROSEN, *Grundriss der Historik*, 3d ed., 1882. Translated by E. B. Andrews, *Outline of the Principles of History*, Boston, 1893. Originally a syllabus to accompany the writer's lectures on historical method, consequently the statements are extremely compact and the philosophical dicta often obscure.

Numerous authors of distinction have at various times delivered lectures in which they have set forth the value of history as a branch of learning and the methods by which the study should be pursued. These lectures in print have diversified practical values, but most of them are stimulating and suggestive as far as they go. Among the best may be mentioned the following:

E. A. FREEMAN, *Methods of Historical Study*, London, 1886. J. A. FROUDE, *Short Studies in Great Subjects*, Vols. I and II, 1894. J. E. E. D. (LORD) ACTON, *A Lecture on the Study of History*, London, 1896. WILLIAM STUBBS, *Seventeen Lectures on the Study of Mediæval and Modern History*, Oxford, 1886, repr., 1887. MACAULAY's views are to be found in the *Edinburgh Review*, XLVII, 331-67. In the *Grande Encyclopédie*, Vol. XX, is an illuminating article on *La Science de l'Histoire* by CHARLES MORTET. Shorter manuals for practical use are

F. M. FLING, *Outline of Historical Method*, and F. H. FOSTER, *Seminary Method of Original Study in the Historical Sciences*. Valuable suggestions upon the principles of research are included in the introduction to HATCH, *Organization of the early Christian Churches*, London, 1881. Profitable comparisons will be found in G. RENARD, *La Méthode Scientifique de l'Histoire Littéraire*, Paris, 1900; A. D. XENOPOL, *Les Principes Fundamentaux de l'Histoire*, Paris, 1899; F. GOTTL, *Die Grenzen der Geschichte*, Leipzig, 1905; JAMES SCHOULER, *The Spirit of Historical Research*, Papers of the American Historical Association, IV. Reprinted in his *Historical Briefs*, 1896; J. H. ROUND, *Historical Research, Nineteenth Century*, XLIV.

#### CHAPTER I. DEFINITION OF HISTORY.

Nearly every writer on the study of history offers a definition of the word. In addition to the footnotes of this chapter attention may be called to WILHELM VON HUMBOLDT's *Complete Works*, I, p. 1; FREDERICK HARRISON, *The Meaning of History*; R. FLINT, *History of the Philosophy of History*.

The materialistic school is represented by BUCKLE, *History of Civilization in England*, 2 vols.; LACOMBE, *De l'Histoire considérée comme science*, 1894. In the nature of a reply to the last is WORMS, *L'Organisation scientifique de l'histoire*, *Revue Internationale de Sociologie*, September, 1894.

An example of the "providential" historian is BUNSEN, *God in History*. A brief sketch of the rise of scientific research in Germany is found in LORD ACTON's *German Schools of History*, *English Historical Review*, Vol. I.

The methods of Herodotus and Thucydides, as well as other Greek historians down to Polybius, are analyzed in J. B. BURY, *The Ancient Greek Historians*, 1909.

#### CHAPTER II. CLASSIFICATION OF MATERIALS.

The bibliography of this chapter is covered by the references given for the chapters which criticize and interpret the respective classes of sources, particularly Chapters XIII-XX.

#### CHAPTER III. EXTERNAL CRITICISM.

Treatises and comments upon the external facts about documents have been written from various points of view, but are

especially frequent in works of philologists and palæographers. A brief introduction of this kind applied to the Latin language, but suggestive for any field, is W. M. LINDSAY's *Introduction to Latin Textual Emendation*, 1896. This shows the possible avenues of error in the transmission of manuscripts. More elementary is HAROLD W. JOHNSTON's *Latin Manuscripts*, 1897, but containing useful chapters on the "Science of Criticism." On this topic consult also BENJAMIN BACON's *Genesis of Genesis*, Chapter II, which is an essay in internal criticism as well. E. G. BOURNE, *Essays in Historical Criticism*, 1901, contains interesting analyses of certain historical episodes shown to be erroneously accepted.

The literature of forgery would rapidly swell the number of examples given in the text. Motives and theories are usually discussed in the recital of the cases. See SURTEES SOCIETY, Vol. LVIII, Preface; E. K. CHAMBERS, *History and Motives of Literary Forgeries*, Oxford, 1891; A. LANG, *Contemporary Review*, XLIV, p. 837, "Literary Forgeries;" M. HEWLITT, *Nineteenth Century*, XXIX, p. 318, "Forged Literature." W. S. WALSH, *Handybook of Literary Curiosities*, Philadelphia, 1893; H. R. MONTGOMERY, *Famous Literary Impostures*, London, 1884. A. S. OSBORN, *Questioned Documents*, is a study and analysis of doubtful materials with an outline of methods by which the facts may be discovered and shown. (Lawyers Cooperative Publishing Co., 1910.)

#### CHAPTER IV. PALÆOGRAPHY.

E. M. THOMPSON, *Handbook of Greek and Latin Palæography*, 343 pp., 12mo, London, 1893. (International Scientific Series.) Historical development with abundant facsimiles presented in a scholarly manner yet easily apprehended by the beginner. Treats of English charter writing as far as the 17th century. HUBERT HALL, *Studies in English official historical documents*, 8vo, 404 pp. Cambridge, University Press, 1908. Part III, pages 355-397, is devoted to palæography but without facsimile examples. Valuable for theories presented. C. T. MARTIN, *The Record Interpreter*; a collection of abbreviations, Latin words and names used in English historical manuscripts and records, 8vo, London, 1892. PALÆOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, *Facsimiles of manuscripts and inscriptions*, ed. E. A. Bond, E. M. Thompson, and G. F.

Warner. Series I and II, 1873-1894. Large folio plates giving examples of the writings of all periods of the European nations. W. ARNDT AND M. TANGL, *Schrifttafeln zur Erlernung der Lateinischen Paläographie*, Berlin, 1898-1903. 107 facsimiles quarto size showing development of Latin writing both literary and documentary. Convenient for the private library. RECUEIL DE FAC-SIMILES à l'usage de l'École des Chartes. 4 series. 100 plates chiefly documentary. H. VON SYBEL AND T. VON SICKEL, *Kaiserurkunden im Abbildungen*. Text 1 vol. 8vo. Facsimiles 11 portfolios, 295 plates. The large size of the plates and the extent of the collection make this the most complete for the study of documentary writing. M. PROU, *Manuel de paléographie*, Paris, 2d ed., 1892. B. BRETHOLZ, *Lateinische Paläographie*, in Meister's *Grundriss der Geschichtswissenschaft*, Band 1. Leipzig, 1906. A. CAPPELLI, *Dizionario dei Abbreviature latine ed italiane*, Milan, 1899. German translation, *Lexicon Abbreviaturarum*, Leipzig, 1901. The most comprehensive study of the Roman shorthand is that of Schmitz. Tables of signs and interpretations are presented in more than a hundred quarto sheets. *Commentarii Notarum Tironiarum*, edidit GUILIELMUS SCHMITZ, 4to, Leipzig, 1893; E. CHATELAIN, *Introduction à la lecture des notes tironiennes*, Paris, 1900.

#### CHAPTER V. DIPLOMATICS.

Only in recent years has the subject of English diplomatics received scientific attention. Notwithstanding the superb collection of continuous historical matter, the classification of forms and procedures has remained far behind those of France and Germany. However, a long stride toward the recovery of this lost ground has been made in the work of HUBERT HALL, *Studies in English Official Documents*, with the supplementary volume, *A Formula Book of English Historical Documents*, Cambridge, 1908. For Germany a brief introduction is conveniently found in MEISTER, *Grundriss der Geschichtswissenschaft*, Vol. I, in which three authors have taken up separate phases of the subject. A similar plan is followed in the *Urkundenlehre* by Erben, Schmitz-Kallenberg, and Redlich, in BELOW AND MEINECKE, *Handbuch der mittelalterlichen und neueren Geschichte*, Munich and Berlin, 1904. The standard work in which the accumulated results of the study are to be

found is H. BRESSLAU, *Handbuch der Urkundenlehre für Deutschland und Italien*, Vol. I, Leipzig, 1889. Equally authoritative but based more on French practice is A. GIRY, *Manuel de Diplomatique*, Paris, 1894. This is also valuable for its references to Anglo-Norman and English documents. F. LEIST, *Urkundenlehre: Katechismus der Diplomatik, Paläographie, Chronologie, und Sphragistik*, Leipzig, new ed., 1893, a useful short compilation of the essentials of these auxiliary sciences. The bibliography of the history of diplomatics will be found in most of the larger treatises.

#### CHAPTER VI. CHRONOLOGY.

Works of chronology which are of interest to the student of documents usually combine a historical view of the development of systems and calendars with practical tables of dates which save the trouble of calculation. The emphasis is sometimes more on one side of this problem than the other. Chiefly valuable for its table of days and reigns, particularly in English history, is the work of J. J. BOND, *Handybook of rules and tables for verifying dates*, London, 4th ed., 1889. *L'ART DE VERIFIER LES DATES* is an immense compilation begun in the eighteenth century and consisting chiefly of tables of events and established dates, published finally in forty-four volumes (1818-44). Following the same plan in condensed form is the folio volume of MAS LATRIE, *Trésor de Chronologie d'Histoire et de Géographie pour l'étude et l'emploi des documents du moyen âge*, Paris, 1889. These are both described by Grotefend as unreliable and double care should be exercised in the use of the older compilers. The work of the greatest value to the user of historical documents is that of GROTEFEND, *Zeitrechnung des deutschen Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*, 2 vols., Hanover, 1891-98. The same author has written a short *Taschenbuch der Zeitrechnung des deutschen Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*, 2d ed., 1905, as well as an introduction to the subject in MEISTER, *Grundriss der Geschichtswissenschaft*.

#### CHAPTER VII. SEALS AND HERALDRY.

The general works on diplomatics devote chapters to the seal as an important part of the document. Particularly noteworthy are GIRY, *Manuel de Diplomatique*, Chapter IX;



BRESSLAU, *Handbuch der Diplomatik*, Vol. I, Chapter entitled "Die Besiegelung." In MEISTER's *Grundriss der Geschichtswissenschaft*, TH. ILGEN contributes a compact treatment of "Sphragistik," followed by a similarly authoritative article on "Heraldik," by ERICH GRITZNER. An extensive bibliography is given with the article "Sigillography" in the *Grande Encyclopédie*.

Heraldry has given rise to a large literature in each of the important countries of Europe. Part of this treats of the theory of heraldry and part consists of compilation of coats of arms and descriptions for reference. Each country has its own lists of arms just as it has its own related genealogies. The artistic taste of one country differs from another, and thus the explanatory literature accumulates, but the underlying theory is the same for all. Consequently the theoretical chapters in an English work will give a satisfactory introduction to all the rest. One of the most complete is that of WOODWARD AND BURNETT, *A Treatise on Heraldry, British and Foreign*, 2 vols., Edinburgh, 1892. An older work, but brought out in repeated new editions and described by some as the best, is CHARLES BOUTELL, *English Heraldry*, 6th ed., with 450 illustrations, London, 1899. A shorter treatise is W. A. COPPINGER's *Heraldry Simplified*, Manchester, University Press, 1910. The great reference book for Germany is SIEBMACHER's *Wappenbuch*, which first appeared in 1604 but has been repeatedly enlarged and republished until it fills 483 folio parts. For France, D'HOZIER, *Armorial général de la France*, 14 vols.; P. GANZ, *Geschichte der Heraldischen Kunst in der Schweiz im XII und XIII Jahrhundert*, 1899. Abundant illustrations.

#### CHAPTERS VIII-IX-X. DETERMINATION OF TIME, AUTHORSHIP, AND INTERDEPENDENCE OF SOURCES.

The questions in these chapters are commonly treated together in the critical editions of literary and historical writers. Consult the prefaces of the various chronicles in the *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica*; the *Chronicles and Memorials for Great Britain* (Rolls Series); publications of the Camden Society, the Surtees Society, and others.

Writers on Biblical history and the philology of the Semitic languages discuss the origins of the Old and New Testaments,

giving the arguments by which the time and authority of the various books are determined. The self biographer is considered psychologically by ANNE ROBESON BURR, *The Autobiography, a critical and comparative study*. H. GLAGAU, *Die Moderne Selbstbiographie als Historische Quelle*, 1903, dwells particularly on the life of Madame Roland.

#### CHAPTER XII. THE WRITER AND HIS TIMES.

The views of H. TAINÉ will be found in his *History of English Literature*, especially in the preface of the English translation; also in his essays on Livy, on La Fontaine, and in his various writings on Art. G. ELLINGER, *Das Verhältniss der öffentlichen Meinung zur Wahrheit und Lüge im 10, 11 und 12ten Jahrhundert*, Berlin, 1884. Evidence as to the presence of a certain amount of critical spirit in the middle ages is brought forward by B. LASCH, *Das Erwachen und die Entwicklung der historischen Kritik im Mittelalter*, 1887. The relations of writer and public are discussed by G. H. PUTNAM in his *Authors and their Public in Ancient Times*, New York, 1894, and *Books and their Makers in the Middle Ages*, 2 vols., 1896-7.

In addition to the works of SCHERER, *Geschichte der Deutschen Literatur*, *Geschichte der Deutschen Dichtung im XI und XII Jahrhundert*, one may study with profit SCHULTZ, *Das Höfische Leben zur Zeit der Minnesinger*, 2 vols., 1879. This work is descriptive of manners and customs, based chiefly on the evidence of literature, and showing both good and bad reasoning from its sources. H. O. TAYLOR, *The Mediæval Mind*, 2 vols., 1911.

#### CHAPTER XIII. EVALUATION OF ORAL TRADITION.

Each group of languages engendered a body of myth which has in turn called forth much writing, both general and monographic, respecting the growth and migration of legend. Attention may be called to a few authors where the theory of oral tradition is discussed. E. B. TYLOR, *Primitive Culture*. EWALD, *History of Israel*. TITO VIGNOLI, *Myth and Science* (*International Scientific Series*), 1882. Mediæval tradition receives careful treatment by H. GÜNTHER, *Legenden Studien*, 1906; H. DELAHAYE, *Les Légendes Hagiographiques*, 1906. Interesting accounts of traditions without much discussion of

theory in H. A. GUERBER, *Legends of Switzerland*. A scientific study of the origins of the Swiss republic, based upon the actual documentary evidence without regard to the Tell episode, will be found in OECHSLI, *Anfänge der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft*, 1891. Also in translation, *Les Origines de la Confédération Suisse*. J. F. HEWITT, *Primitive Traditional History*, 2 vols., 1907. This is a study of the myth-making periods of India, Southern Asia, Egypt, and Europe. Mrs. T. F. TOUT, *The Legend of St. Ursula*, in *Historical Essays* by Members of Owens College, Manchester, 1902.

#### CHAPTER XIV. PICTORIAL SOURCES OF HISTORY.

Copious use of early drawings and miniatures has been made in THOMAS WRIGHT, *The Homes of Other Days*, 1871. Also in BIRCH AND JENNER, *Early Drawings and Illuminations: an introduction to the study of illustrated manuscripts*, 1879. J. O. WESTWOOD, *Facsimiles of the Miniatures and Ornaments of Anglo-Saxon and Irish Manuscripts*, 1868. De BASTARD, *Peintures et Ornaments des Manuscrits depuis le 8<sup>e</sup> siècle jusqu'au fin du 16<sup>e</sup>*, 2 vols., Fol. Contains no descriptive text but beautiful illustrations.

Discussions of the pictorial history of the Norman Conquest will be found in F. R. FOWKE, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, 1898; J. C. BRUCE, *The Bayeux Tapestry Elucidated*, 1885. Colored reproductions in *Vetusta Monumenta*, Vol. VI, 1819-23, by C. A. STOTHARD.

The standard histories of art which contain illustrations, and the innumerable cheap reproductions afford opportunity to study the historic appreciation of painters and sculptors, quite apart from the technic of those professions. For Egypt, see MASPERO, *Manual of Egyptian Archæology*.

The engravings of Jost Amman have been edited by G. HIRTH. For the purposes of this chapter see his *Stände und Handwerker*, and the *Frauentrachtenbuch*. MATHAUS MERIAN, *Topographia Helvetiæ, Rhetiæ et Valesiæ*, 1642. Views frequently reproduced.

Most interesting and instructive is J. ZEMP, *Die Schweizerischen Bilderchroniken und ihre Architectur-Darstellungen*, 1897. Numerous illustrations.

Besides the works upon the general archæology of Rome consult J. H. POLLEN, *A Description of the Trajan Column*.

Abtheilung 2, Capitel 3, "Die Logik der Geschichtswissenschaften."

# CHAPTER XXII. THE CONSTRUCTIVE PROCESS.

The natural environment as a factor in human history is accepted with various degrees of emphasis by the writers here selected. ELLEN C. SEMPLE, *Influences of Geographic Environment, on the basis of Ratzel's System of Anthropo-Geography*, 1911. Valuable both as a medium of German science and for the writer's own interpretations. Application of these principles to this continent is to be found in an earlier work by this author; E. C. SEMPLE, *American History and its Geographic Conditions*, 1903. An excellent brief treatment of the general subject is the work of H. B. GEORGE, *The Relations of Geography and History*, 1901. See also, N. S. SHALES, *Nature and Man in America*.

For early conceptions see JEAN BODIN, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*, 1566, with comments of R. FLINT, *Philosophy of History in France*, p. 193; J. STRADA, *La Loi de l'Histoire; constitution scientifique de l'histoire*, 1894. P. LACOMBE, *De l'Histoire considérée comme science*, 1894. Reviewed from opposing point of view by R. WORMS, *L'Organisation Scientifique de l'Histoire*, *Revue Internationale de Sociologie*, 1894.

History from the economic point of view is exemplified in J. E. T. ROGERS, *History of Agriculture and Prices in England, 1259-1793*, 6 vols., 1866-87. From this the author drew forth his *Six Centuries of Work and Wages*, 2 vols., 1884-90, and later described his methods in *The Economic Interpretation of History*. S. N. PATTEN, *The Development of English Thought, a study on the economic interpretation of history*, 1899. Numerous theories which are not generally accepted. The effect of natural environment upon particular peoples is to be seen in the opening chapters of CURTIUS, *History of Greece*; L. DRAPEYRON, *Traduction Topographique de l'Histoire*; Jeanne d'Arc: application de la géographie à l'étude de l'histoire, both articles in *Revue de Géographie*, 1891. CH. GARNIER and A. AMMAN, *L'Habitation Humaine dans ses rapports avec la géographie physique, l'état politique et les usages locaux*, 1892. Contributes also to the study of architecture as a psychological problem as in the chapter on Relics, above.

## CHAPTER XXIII. PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN HISTORY.

The inquirer must thread his way among writers upon philosophy, psychology, sociology, and social psychology. The latter branch of learning is still in the early stages of its evolution. The topics mentioned in this chapter are treated in the books which follow: G. TARDE, *The Laws of Imitation*, Translated from 2nd French Edition (Holt), 1903. J. M. BALDWIN, *Social and Ethical Interpretations in Mental Development*, 1897. E. A. ROSS, *Social Psychology*, 1908. L. F. WARD, *The Psychic Factors of Civilization*, 2nd ed., 1906. G. LEBON, *Psychologie des Foules*, 12th ed., 1907. F. H. GIDDINGS, *Principles of Sociology*, 1899. F. H. GIDDINGS, *Democracy and Empire*, 1900.

## CHAPTERS XXIV-XXV. PRESENTATION AND LITERARY STYLE.

It is not necessary to refer here to the standard works on English literary composition. The style of the various historians is usually discussed also by their more weighty reviewers and essayists. M. CREIGHTON, *Picturesqueness in History*, *Cornhill Magazine*, 1897, pp. 305-20. W. STERLING-MAXWELL, *Historical Style*, in his *Miscellaneous Essays and Addresses*. H. TAINÉ, *Essais de Critique et de l'Histoire*. F. BRUNETIÈRE, *Histoire et Littérature*, 3 vols., 1892-98. ST. BEUVE, *Causeries de Lundi*. (Consult Index Volume.)

Suggestive also is G. FREYTAG, *Technic of the Drama*, Trans. E. J. MacEwan, 1895; A. HENNEQUIN, *The Art of Play-writing*, 1890. E. HENNEQUIN, *La Critique Scientifique*, 1888. Contains an analysis of Victor Hugo which is a valuable model of inquiry for a literary investigation.



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